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# HISTORIC HOMESTEADS *of* KINGS COUNTY



FIRST EDITION CHARLES ANDREW DITMAS

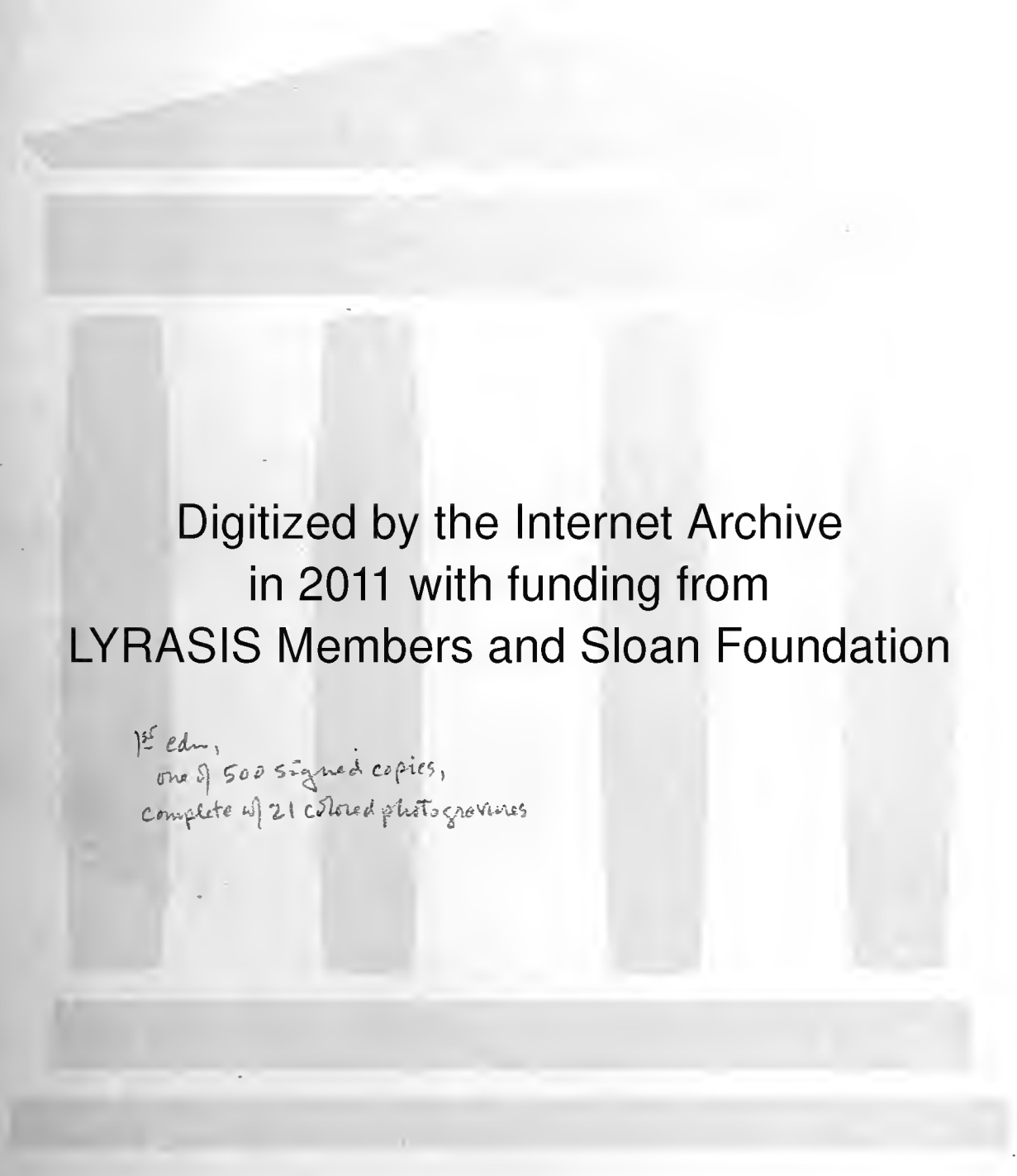






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Hendrick I. Lott Homestead, erected 1800

# Historic Homesteads of Kings County

FIRST EDITION LIMITED TO FIVE HUNDRED SIGNED  
AND NUMBERED COPIES, AND ILLUSTRATED  
BY TWENTY HAND-COLORED GELATINE  
PHOTO-GRAVURES AND ONE  
COVER PIECE

*This Book is No.* 359

*Charles Andrew Litmas*

*Member of the Long Island Historical Society and many Patriotic Associations*



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By Charles A. Ditmas



*To*  
*MY PARENTS*  
*I Affectionately Dedicate This Book*

The Winthrop  
Press



New York

## Preface

In these days of commercialism, we are forgetting the historic and the beautiful; the past is seldom considered until the march of progress destroys some landmark which history has made famous. Then, after the usual newspaper articles have appeared, the place is lost sight of in the possibilities of the future.

I have endeavored in this volume to tell the story of some of the "Old Homesteads of Kings County." As there can be nothing truthful that is original in a work of this kind, I claim no credit as an author. It is simply a compilation of facts secured from many authorities and written in a series of connective stories. I have endeavored to be accurate, and I believe I have succeeded in producing a book, that, on the whole, is authentic.

It represents six months' careful study on the part of one who was brought up among the very people of whom he has written, and in many instances members of the families written about have corrected the proofs. I am indebted to many persons for aid and advice, and to those who have assisted me in various ways I extend an appreciation of their assistance.

The object in compiling this book is to preserve the history, tradition and genealogy of the old homesteads of Kings County. The work is just beginning, and if I am encouraged by the sale of this book, other sections in similar garb and form will be brought out from time to time. If your home does not appear in this book, it may in the next, or in some other volume. Information concerning the other old homesteads is solicited and will be filed for future use.

CHARLES ANDREW DITMAS

*Brooklyn, N. Y., July 1st, 1909*



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## Introduction

### *The Dutch Farm Houses in Kings County*

The Dutch Farm Houses with which we are familiar are different from the houses of any other time or country. They are even unlike the houses of Holland. This was due to necessity. The Dutch farmers developed a type of house most suited to their new home.

The earliest houses erected on Long Island were of the Arts and Craft variety, hand-made throughout, but after numerous fires had occurred the people built largely of sun-dried brick. They were made in the local kiln, for each town had its own kiln.

Almost all houses after 1700 were built of wood, and then the design of the comfortable Dutch farm house was developed. It was a broadening out of the original Holland house so as to extend over a larger area. In Netherlands they built miniature sky-scrapers, but in America land was plentiful and there was room to spread out.

The house we are describing is the typical one. Facing the south, as all Dutch houses faced the south, they often stood endwise to the road. In those early days the house had little or no cellar, but after 1750 large spacious cellars were the custom.

In the older houses, as those which were built before 1800, all the rooms were, generally, on the ground floor. The large attic was used for storage. A large amount of the labor of the housewife was performed here in summer, such as quilting, spinning and weaving.

The exterior design consisted of a main house, through the center of which, in later years, extended the broad hall, with a great door at both ends. Bull's-eye windows were cut in these doors, to admit more light than was transmitted into the hall by the transoms. Frequently, these doors were beautifully carved.

On each side of this hall were two rooms; to the right a parlor and a bedroom. Often this bedroom was divided into two rooms. To the left was a sitting room and one or two back bedrooms.

## Introduction

From the sitting room a door opened into the wing. As the wing was generally lower than the main house, you would be obliged to descend a couple of steps to enter the dining room. This room had usually a small long bedroom back of it. These two rooms composed the main wing, and over this wing the slaves slept. Extending from it, was a leaning roofed wing, which housed the kitchen. It was likewise lower than the main wing, and was reached by steps. The main feature of the kitchen was its great size and its Dutch oven. In recent years a second story has been built in the attic, thus increasing the size, comfort and convenience of the old Dutch houses.







The Captain Cornelius Vanderveer Homestead, erected 1787

## The Captain Cornelius Vanderveer Homestead

There are few houses as near perfect structures of their type as this grand old homestead. Few descendants have had the wisdom to leave the buildings alone which their ancestors had constructed, but have made them ludicrous by changing their contour and adding monstrosities of jig-saw work, instead of adding modern improvements and leaving the simple lines that are so dear to the architect of a well-balanced mind, which the original designer intended it to have.

This house was erected by Captain Cornelius Vanderveer, "Flatbush's Hero of the Revolution." It was built near the site of the old homestead, presumably built by Cornelius Janse Vanderveer, the common ancestor of the family. He came to New Amsterdam from Alkmaar in North Holland, in 1659, and received a patent on March 12th, 1661, from Governor Stuyvesant, for 26 morgans of land in Flatbush. He purchased a farm from Jan Janse Fyn for 2600 guilders, and added it to this farm. He married Tryntjie Gillis de Mandeville, and held several leading positions in civil life.

The above mentioned had a son, Cornelius Vanderveer, Jr., who inherited his father's farm, and married Jannetje Van Nostrand. He held the office of Sheriff of Kings County in 1731. We find his will probated April 8th, 1782, on file in the New York Surrogate's office. He was the father of Captain Cornelius Vanderveer, who was born on December 5th, 1731; died February 13th, 1804. He married in November, 1761, Leah Van Kirk, who was born January 27th, 1741, and died May 23rd, 1813.

Doctor Strong, in his "History of Flatbush," tells how Captain Vanderveer was taken prisoner, basely treated and insulted, and how he came near being hanged, but for a friend, Captain Miller, a British officer. This occurred after he had sent his family over to New Jersey. He remained behind to try to save his property, but he met with poor success. He was under parole of the British, and after Flatbush was far removed from the scene of hostilities he presumably sent for his family. We find him at various times helping the American cause. A suit of clothes was made at his house to enable Captain Lyman to escape beyond the British lines and join the American Army. He also loaned money to Governor Clinton to enable New York to carry on the war. The flag was made in his house which waved from

## The Captain Cornelius Vanderveer Homestead

the Liberty Pole erected at Flatbush to celebrate the departure of the British troops from Long Island.

Captain Vanderveer had the following issue:

(1) John C. Vanderveer, born March 22nd, 1762; died April 7th, 1845. He married in 1787, Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Adrian Van Brunt of New Utrecht. He served in the Revolution, and was one of Flatbush's noteworthy men. From September, 1813, until August, 1837, he was County Treasurer. In 1802, and again from 1811 to 1813, he was Assemblyman, and from April, 1804, to April, 1832, he was Supervisor of Flatbush. He had the following children:

(A). Ann Vanderveer, married Jeremiah Vanderbilt.

(B). Jane Vanderveer, married Judge Gerret L. Martense.

(C). Maria Vanderveer, died single.

(D). Cornelius Vanderveer, married Maria Eldert.

(E). Doctor Adrian Vanderveer, married Eliza Lott.

(F). John Vanderveer, born June 22nd, 1802; married on May 7th, 1828, to Gertrude Van Alst. He owned and resided in the homestead and is now deceased. Of his children, Peter†, a bachelor, and Mrs. (Elizabeth Van Brunt Vanderveer) Lewis T. Titus, live in the homestead. Mrs. Titus' daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Van Dyke Cruser with their two daughters, live there also, thus making the sixth generation which have resided in this house, and the eighth to live on this farm. Of the other children of John Vanderveer, Adrian is a farmer of Queens County, Long Island, and Doctor John R. Vanderveer, a well-known practitioner of his day; Jacob P., a farmer of Flatbush; George and Aletta P. are deceased.

(G). Rutgert Vanderveer, died single and at sea.

(H). Gerret Vanderveer, died in childhood.

(J). Peter Vanderveer, died single.

(2). Gerret Vanderveer (son of the Captain), born August 12th, 1765, died December 12th, 1847. He married Catherine Lott, born May 29th, 1767, died September 28th, 1831. She was a daughter of Colonel Jeromus Lott and Lammetie Rapalje, his wife. His father erected a house for him on the southern part of the farm, which he occupied until his death. He had a

---

† Since deceased.

## The Captain Cornelius Vanderveer Homestead

daughter who married Simon Cortelyou. They occupied her father's part of her grandfather's farm, and upon their death it was sold for distribution among their heirs.

(3). Anne Vanderveer (daughter of the Captain), born in 1768, died June 16th, 1846. She married Tunis J. Bergen, of Gowanus, and had issue two sons, John T. and Cornelius Bergen.

(4). Jane Vanderveer (daughter of the Captain), born November 15th, 1775, died September 26th, 1831; married Simon Bergen, of Gowanus, and had issue:

(A). Gashe Bergen, married Johannes H. Lott, of Flatlands.

(B). Leah Bergen, married Jacob Morris, of the United States Navy.

(C). Ann Bergen, who married Peter Bergen.

(D). Catharine Bergen, who married Teunis S. Barkeloo.

(E). Jane Bergen, who married first Calvin F. Spear; and on his death, James Millward.



The Captain John Schenck House at Crooke's Island, erected about 1656

## The Captain John Schenck Homestead

In this sketch the compiler has traced back to the year 1346, when we find Hendrick Schenck van Nydeck, Knight, Lord of Afferden and Walbeek and Feoffer of Wachtendonck, a man of importance in the low countries, who married Aelide Rayde, heiress of Walbeek. They had a son and heir Hendrick, Knight, Lord of Afferden, Walbeek and Blynbeek, Feoffer of Wachtendonck, Bailiff of Gelderend; who died December 8th, 1452, and married Aleide van Goen van Keldenbrock. They were the parents of Diederick, Lord of Afferden and Blynbeek and half of Walbeek and Wachtendonck, Marshall of Cleve; who married Adelkeit van Buren and died August, 1487. Their son and heir Derick, Lord of Afferden, Blynbeek and Walbeek, married Aleid Coster of Aerzen. He died at Blynbeek, August 3rd, 1525, leaving heir his son, Derick, Lord of Afferden and Blynbeek, who married Maria Van Galen and had a son and heir Derick, Lord of Afferden and Blynbeek, who married Anna van Berlaer. They were the parents of the progenitor of the race of Schenck, who valued a noble name above a title.

General Peter Schenck van Nydeck was a son of the last named Derick, Lord of Afferden, etc. He was born at Gosh in 1547, married at Doesburgh, May 17th, 1580, to Johanna van Schenpenzeel. To them was born a son at Doesburgh on August 7th, 1584, whom they named Martin Schenck Van Nydeck. He was the father of Jan Martinse Schenck, probably born at Amersfoort Holland, and married at Amersfort (Flatlands), Long Island, in 1672 or 1673 to Jannetje Stephens Van Voorheis. He emigrated with other members of his family to America in June, 1650, and was the father of Martin Janse Schenck, of Flatlands, born in 1675, married on December 2nd, 1703, to Cornelia Van Wesselen or Van Wesell, widow of Domine Lupardius. Inherited by his father's will the "Old land with the small island and mill."

He had issue John (known as Captain John), born December 13th, 1705, married November 15th, 1728, Femmetie Hegeman. His heirs and legatees sold the mill property, containing about 66 acres of upland, 6 acres of woodland and a parcel of salt-meadows, on April 15th, 1784, to Joris Martense, of Flatbush, for £2300.

"The old dwelling house of wood standing on Mill Island, according to tradition, was erected by the Schencks after their purchase, and is now" (1909)

## The Captain John Schenck Homestead

over 250 years old. If this is true, it is the oldest habitable house in Kings County, if not in New York State.

Joris Martense, who purchased this property, was a leading citizen and large land holder. He is said by Dr. Strong to have advanced \$5,500 to the American cause, while the British supposed he was favoring them. It was at his house that Major Moncrief was quartered when Captain William Marriner, in his secret midnight expedition against Flatbush described in the sketch on the Van Pelt Manor House, took him prisoner. The premises described in the deed of the heirs of John Schenck to Joris Martense, were devised by him to his daughter, Susan Martense, who afterwards married Patrick Caton. She is frequently mentioned in Strong's History of Flatbush, and Caton Avenue is named in her honor.

Mrs. Caton devised the property to Robert L. Crooke, as trustee for her daughter, Margaret, wife of General Philip S. Crooke. Mrs. Crooke devised the property to her husband, General Philip S. Crooke, as trustee for her children, and on his death to go in fee simple to the said children. General Crooke had the power to sell and convey in fee or lesser estate.

On July 5th, 1870, Philip S. Crooke, as trustee under the will of Margaret Crooke, conveys to Robert L. Crooke this farm, which he bounds as follows: "All that Grist mill and mill dam or mill pond and meadows thereunto belonging, situated lying and being within the bounded limits of the Township of Flatlands aforesaid, as also all that island commonly called the Mill Island, all the meadows, marshes, creeks, and ditches thereunto belonging. Containing by estimation five hundred acres of meadows or marshes, and five acres in Mill Island and all that tract of upland lying in the Township of Flatlands aforesaid; Bounded westerly by land formerly of Martin Schenck; northerly by meadows formerly of Jacobus Deventer and meadows formerly of the Estate of said John Schenck; southerly by the Mill Creek and meadows formerly of Johannes Ditmars; westerly and southerly by the land formerly belonging to William Stoothoff, containing by estimation sixty-six acres."

On July 5th, 1873, Robert L. Crooke conveyed these premises to Philip S. Crooke. On October 18th, 1876, Philip S. Crooke conveys these premises to Frank Crooke. After a series of eleven affecting conveyances between



## The Captain John Schenck Homestead

various members of the Crooke family and others, the title became vested in Robert L. Crooke, in so much as we are speaking of Mill Island, and he and Elizabeth, his wife, sold it on January 12th, 1906, to Florence C. Smith. On the next day she deeded it to "Flatbush East," a real estate company, who, on December 31st, 1906, transferred it to the Flatbush Improvement Company, who developed the property by dredging out the creeks with hydraulic dredges and filling up the meadows with the sand thus excavated. They practically created 332 acres of upland, raising the meadows some eight feet above high tide. The work was done by the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company under the direction of Captain Alexander Ross Piper, late of the United States Army and a former Deputy Police Commissioner of New York City. The financial panic of 1907 caused the company some difficulty, and on January 14th, 1909, they deeded the property to the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company, who are now the owners.

It is an interesting fact, when we consider the coming construction of the great port of entry at Jamaica Bay, that the Schencks, who came from Holland, were interested in ships which carried freight between New Netherlands and Old Netherlands, that they had a dock here at Mill Island and their boats came regularly across the ocean, using Jamaica Bay as a terminal. Thus commerce existed here two hundred and fifty years ago, and Flatlands lost that commerce through lack of attention to its demands.



The John Ditmars Homestead, erected previous to the Revolution

## The John Ditmars Homestead

From Jamaica Bay, extending through the meadows which border it, and along a swale of meadowland, is a stream that was formerly called Bestevaar Kill. This name has now given place to Paerdegat, which in the olden times applied only to the upper end of the stream. Above this stream lay the old Van Twiller and Corlear Flats. Corlear's Flat was purchased by Jacob Van Corlear in 1635, from the Indians, and in 1636 a deed was given by the Indian proprietors to Wouter Van Twiller, the director for Van Twiller's Flat. The land is rolling to the south of the Bestevaar Kill.

If you will drive or motor over the old Kings Highway from Flatbush Avenue to Eastern Parkway, you will pass through this country and see some of the old farm houses standing where they were originally erected. Mute reminders of a glorious past; of a charming rural home life and a contentment seldom realized in the more modern city. The name of this road has changed. It was originally a part of a system of roads which extended from Fort Hamilton to Jamaica, intersected at Flatlands by a road which ran north to the present foot of Joralemon Street. Part of this road is preserved in Amersfort Place, on which the compiler lives, and part in Flatbush Avenue. It was along this road that Cornwallis marched his men when he outflanked Washington in the Battle of Long Island.

The homestead we are about to chronicle is situated on the part of this road which is now called Kouwenhoven Place. It is on high ground which slopes to the Paerdegat. Part of the farm appertaining to it is in Flatbush, but the homestead and part of the land is in Flatlands. From early records it seems that this land was purchased from various owners by Jan Stevense, whose surname was Van Voorhees. He was a son of Steven Coerts, the common ancestor of the Voorhees family in this country, and his son, Roelof Voorhees, having no sons of his own, left the farm to his grandson, Johannes Ditmars. We know that the first Ditmars who resided permanently in Flatlands was Jan Ditmars, eldest son of Johannes Ditmarsen, of Flatbush; grandson of Jan Van Ditmarsen, and great-grandson of Jan Jansen, the common ancestor. Jan Ditmars married Femmetje, daughter of Roelof Voorhees. Jan was baptized August 31st, 1718.

The majority of historians make a supposition concerning his marriage to Femmetje Voorhees, but the compiler has seen proof in a copy made by

## The John Ditmars Homestead

Mr. Onderdonk and on file in MS. in the Long Island Historical Society's Library, of the persons married by Domine Van Sinderen. I understand that it has been copied and published in a year book of the Holland Society. It is recorded there that Jan Ditmars and Femmetje Voorhees were married April 30th, 1748. They had four children, of whom only the eldest reached manhood. He was born March 28th, 1749, and was named Johannes. His father died on November 23rd, 1756, and Femmetje, his mother, on July 27th, 1793.

Johannes Ditmars was married to Margrietie Rapalje on December 12th, 1781. She was born October 1st, 1759, and was a direct descendant of Joris Jansen de Rapalje, the common ancestor, and likewise a cousin of George Rapalje, the well-known traveller and writer, who married a daughter of Bishop Provost, the rebel Bishop of New York. She passed away January 10th, 1785, and left issue a son, John Ditmars, born June 1st, 1783, and a daughter, Margaret, who married Johannes Emmans, and she is the ancestress of the Napier family of Woodhaven. (See sketch of the Johannes Emmans Homestead.) Johannes Ditmars inherited from his grandfather, Roelof Voorhees, all his real estate. After the death of his first wife he married Lammietje Lott, who survived him without issue. She was a daughter of Johannes Lott, of Flatlands Neck.

John Ditmars, born as stated, married September 22nd, 1802, Margaret Van Sicklen, a daughter of Abraham Van Sicklen and Cornelia Cornell, his wife, of New Lots. She was born July 13th, 1785, and passed away April 10th, 1874. She spent the last twenty-five years in total blindness. No one has ever said other than loving words of her. Those who knew her, guard her memory as precious recollections of the past, and we of the present generation may learn a lesson from the devotion of those who knew her; if we could only live the life of simple piety and sweet resignation that she lived, we might be able to leave to our friends a memory which they would esteem as a special heritage, as they do the recollections of this christian lady. John Ditmars died August 20th, 1827, leaving issue:

(1). Margaret Ditmars, born August 13th, 1803; married April 12th, 1827, to George Van Nuyse, of Flatlands, born September 10th, 1802; died September 11th, 1831. They had one child, Cornelia Ditmars Van Nuyse,

## The John Ditmars Homestead

born in this house, January 29th, 1829. She married April 15th, 1849, John Holmes Van Brunt, of Bay Ridge, and died on May 15th, 1862, leaving issue: Albert H. Van Brunt and Margaret Ditmars Van Brunt, who married Andrew Ditmas of the Flatbush branch of the family. They are the parents of your compiler.

(2). John Ditmars, born April 18th, 1806; died August 28th, 1844. He received by petition the homestead part of his father's farm. On May 17th, 1838, he married Elizabeth Vanderveer, a daughter of Cornelius Vanderveer and a great grand-daughter of Captain Cornelius Vanderveer, spoken of elsewhere in this book. She was born November 30th, 1818; died April 8th, 1898. They were the parents of the following:

(A). John, who died in childhood.

(B). Cornelius Ditmars, born May 31st, 1840; married January 3rd, 1866, to Margaret Van Houten, widow of Lorenzo M. Starr. Mr. Ditmars was the last of the Ditmars to own and reside on this farm, which he sold in 1902. He now resides in Flatbush. All of Mr. and Mrs. Ditmars' children were born here, namely: Elizabeth, now the wife of Mr. Willard Parker Schenck, a son of Dr. Tunis Schenck, deceased; Anna Lavina, who died in babyhood; John Townsend, who died in his eighteenth year; and Maria Marguerite Ditmars.

(C). Abraham Ditmars, married Isabella Kilgore, and had issue a son, Townsend Van Pelt Ditmars.

(D). Maria Elizabeth Ditmars, now the wife of Townsend Cortelyou Van Pelt, of New Utrecht. (See sketch of the Van Pelt Manor House.)

(3). Cornelia Ditmars, born September 22nd, 1808; died July 3rd, 1884; married Peter De Baun, a well-known cabinet and piano manufacturer of New York. Mrs. De Baun and Mrs. Van Nuyse received on partition of their father's estate in 1839, the westerly farm, each receiving half. This property contained about 70 acres. Mrs. Van Nuyse's husband owned the farm, late of his grand-children, Albert H. Van Brunt and Mrs. Ditmas, which adjoined this farm on the south, and his wife took the southerly part of this farm, Mrs. De Baun taking the northerly section lying next to the land of Judge John A. Lott. There she erected on the old road, now Amersfort Place and Avenue F, a beautiful house, and laid out extensive grounds

## The John Ditmars Homestead

making it the show place of the country. After her death her farm was divided into sections, and the home with three acres of ground was bought by Mrs. Remsen, a niece. This place was recently built up with houses. The builder took the old house, cut the basement out, took the two wings off, and out of what was left made a two-family house, laying out literally a full sized apartment in the double parlors. This farm (the west farm of John Ditmars) was, I believe, a part of the Little Flat purchased from the Indians by Andries Hedden and Wolphert Garritsen (Van Couwenhoven). It came into possession of the Ditmars in 1707.

(4). Abraham Ditmars, born July 14th, 1814; died April 19th, 1849, without issue.

(5). James Ditmars, born January 3rd, 1822; died January 8th, 1858, married Gitty or Gertrude Remsen, owned the southerly part of his father's main farm. Had issue: Margaret, who died young; Mary Gertrude, married George Voorhees, resides in Morristown, New Jersey, and has issue several children. Cornilia Ditmars married Steven V. Remsen; both are deceased, leaving issue one son, James Ditmars Remsen, of New York. John Ditmars, who married Elizabeth Lennington, is a resident of Brooklyn, and has had several children, three daughters of whom survive. Jacob Ditmars, who married Jessie Vance, of Morristown, New Jersey, and has issue a daughter, Margarita Ditmars, now Mrs. Donald, of Portland, Oregon, and a son, J. Remsen Ditmars, of New York.

Many interesting reminiscences are told of this homestead. I will repeat the most important tradition as it has been handed down, and also give you the facts as they are recorded. Cold though they may seem, yet they show the truth of the tradition.

Johannes Ditmars, born March 28th, 1749, was left a large fortune by his father. It is a conceded fact that the Ditmars family were among the richest inhabitants of Kings County before the Revolution. On the death of his father, a neighbor and friend was appointed his guardian and discharged the office to the satisfaction of young Ditmars, but the Revolution saw them on opposite sides. Ditmars espoused the Whig cause and his friend was on the Royal side. Ditmars was one of the largest land holders in Flatlands, and had large interests to protect and an aged mother to look after; for these

## The John Ditmars Homestead

reasons he did not take up arms. Tradition\* also tells that he was in delicate health all his life, and as he lived only forty-six years, there is some foundation for the belief. He is said to have advanced large sums of money to aid the American cause, of which I have been unable to find record, on account of it not having been repaid. It is a fact that the only records of money loaned the state or nation during the Revolution are the records of receipts, given by those who received their money back with interest. At all events, he was conspicuous for favoring the American cause.

Just before the landing of the British, Washington ordered the farmers of Kings and Queens counties to stack their grain and fodder in the fields, so if the enemy approached it could be burned without endangering the buildings, and to drive their stock into the interior. Ditmars' former guardian refused to comply, so when the enemy advanced the American soldiers, who were detailed to burn the fodder, were setting fire to the hay as it stood in the barn, when Ditmars, whose stacks were already ablaze in the fields, rushed in, put out the kindling that was started, and springing on top of a pile of hay shouted, "If you burn this barn you burn me." He was respected by the Americans to that extent that they left the barn undisturbed.

Another tradition is that Johannes Ditmars had several bags of gold coin locked in a cupboard in his bedroom. Some of the British soldiers who were quartered in the neighborhood learned the fact, and made arrangements to relieve Mr. Ditmars of his money. Stealing in one night, they seized him and his mother while asleep in bed, bound and placed them under a feather bed, and endeavored to extort Ditmars into opening the cupboard, which he refused to do, whereupon they started to hack it to pieces with swords. They were not long engaged in the operation, when the slaves, who slept over the kitchen, realized that it was up to them to rescue their master. The story continues on, that they armed themselves with old blunderbusses and discarded weapons, such as slaves were allowed to carry, and descending by the back stairs assaulted the place from the outside, making as much noise as possible. In the fight they took three of the ruffians prisoners. Two escaped from them, the third they lodged safely in the Flatbush Jail, but he was permitted by the authorities to make his escape. These slaves were just

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\*He was probably with the militia in the Battle of Long Island.

## The John Ditmars Homestead

in time to save their master and mistress from smothering to death. Old Cominey and Cuff were regarded with affection, and lived all their lives in the Ditmars family.

In Onderdonk's Revolutionary Incidents of Kings County, we find mention of this event as follows:

"959 £20 Reward—Last neight Nov 5 about 8 oclock, 4 men, with weapons forced into the house of Johannes Ditmars, Flatlands, and beat him and his mother in a cruel manner. Through his resentment, three of them went off, the fourth was put in Flatbush Jail, but escaped the same night wounded in the head, and said his name was Jos. Mosier. Gainé Nov.8'83."

It will be noticed that this occurred about a month previous to the evacuation of the United States by the British who occupied Long Island, and were responsible for any molestation of the inhabitants.

Relics of this house are numerous. Nearly all of the descendants of Johannes Ditmars have one or more of the coins that were in the bags which the robbers were after, as on the death of each descendant the coins he had inherited were divided among his descendants. My mother has several of these, in crown denomination of the reign of George III. Miss Napier has the cupboard, showing the sword marks where the ruffians tried to break it in. Mrs. Van Pelt has Femmetje Voorhees's Bible. My mother, Mrs. Ditmas, has in her parlor a tea table, which belonged to Femmetje Voorhees, and is said to be over two hundred years old, having been brought from Holland by one of her ancestors. The original brass handle on the drawer is still in use, and is as good as the day it was put there.

The old grandfather's clock, which has been with the Ditmars family for more than a century in all their joys and sorrows, is in the possession of Mr. Cornelius Ditmars. He has also the conch shell, which was used as a horn, for calling the slaves to dinner, and the old cnorph used by the Ditmars family for over a century. He has also the old copper-kettle and brazier, and the small brazier used to pass coals around with which to light the pipes. Speaking of pipes, Mrs. Ditmars has a pair of Church Warden pipe boxes. They are mahogany inlaid boxes, in which the pipes were placed. In the bottom of these boxes were drawers to contain flint and steel. They are not



## The John Ditmars Homestead

Ditmars heirlooms, but they are the only pair I know of today, and for that reason I note them. Mr. John Ditmars, of Brooklyn, has a miniature of John Ditmars, which he gave his bride, and it is therefore over one hundred years old.



The Bergen's Island House, erected before the Revolution

## The Bergen's Island Homestead

The first real estate promoter of note in Flatlands, if not on Long Island, was the common ancestor of the Stoothoffs, a gentleman who bore the name of Elbert Elbertse, and who had emigrated in the year 1637 from Nieukerken, in the province of North Brabant, Netherland. He was born in 1620, and died about 1688. According to recorded deeds he was, at the time of his death, in possession of over 600 acres of upland in the town of Flatlands.

We quote Tunis G. Bergen's Bergen Family in relation to his purchase of Bergen's Island. "On the 25th of November, 1665, for 125 guilders wampum, he purchased of 'Mactel Spieser' (probably the heir of Thomas Spicer), as endorsed on the back of the Indian deed hereinafter referred to, 'Meutelaer' (as per patent) Island, now known as Bergen's Island, in Flatlands. This island was patented May 14th, 1646, by Gov. Kieft, to Capt. John Underhill, a mercenary soldier from New England, employed by Gov. Kieft to fight the Indians, who finally settled in Queen's County, where he has numerous descendants. Underhill sold his patent to Thomas Spicer (of Gravesend), who, July 20th, 1652, extinguished the Indian title, the deed of which is in the English language, and sets forth that the island is called by the Dutch 'Meller's Island' and by the Indians 'Wimbacoe,' and that it is given 'for and in consideration of full and plenarie satisfaction already paid and delivered unto us,' and is signed by 'Specke Jon alias Aremacus, Oranke, Quahsse, and Ohachama' in the presence of 'Ambrose Londdon,' interpreter and John Lake (both of Gravesend), as witnesses."

Elbert Elbertse's first wife by whom all his children were born, was Altie Cornelis, daughter of Cornelis Lambertsen Cool, of Gowanus, and widow of Garret Wolfertse van Couwenhoven, whom he married August 27th, 1645. After her death he again married on July 21st, 1683, Sara Roeloffse, widow of Cornelis Van Bossum and a daughter of the world-renowned Anneke Janse, by her first husband, Roeloff Van Masterlandt. She followed her mother's footsteps and led no less than three husbands to the altar and outlived all of them. Elbert Elbertse and his first wife had four children, whom I will enumerate, so that which is at best a complicated line may be better understood.

Elbert, Jr., baptized January 26th, 1648, died young.

Gerret Elbertse, only surviving son and successor.

## The Bergen's Island Homestead

Heiltie Elbertse, who married Thomas Willets, Sen., of Flushing.

Aegie Elbertse, who married John Teunisse Van Dyckhuysen. He seems to have had a business instinct and to have succeeded to a part of his father-in-law's power. For many years I believe he was the principal citizen in Flatlands.

Gerret Elbertse (now called Stoothoff) was married twice; First to Willemtie Pieters (sup.) Monfoort, and second August 10th, 1684, to Johanna Nevius. He had a son, Elbert Stoothoff, who married Johanna Lupardus, daughter of the Rev. Gulielmus Lupardus on March 28th, 1714. They were the parents of Gerret born August 13th, 1715 O. S. He married Lammetie Stryker, in 1739. He was accidentally drowned in Flatlands Bay. One of his daughters, Annatie, was born February 21st, 1743; married April, 1760, Tunis Bergen, of Gowanus, died July 23rd, 1819.

We again quote the Bergen Family, by Tunis G. Bergen. "About 1764, a suit was commenced by Tunis Bergen and Annatie, his wife, John Stevens, and Saartie, his wife, and William Nallison and Eitie, his wife, against John Stiles (a fictitious name), and Wilhelmus Stoothoff, for the recovery of the island located in the meadows and on the shores of the bay in Flatlands, patented by Gov. Kieft to Capt. John Underhill, known as Winpaggie, Meutelaers, or Omety's Island (now Bergens Island), containing about 90 acres of upland, on the ground that their wives, the daughters and heirs of Gerret Stoothoff, were entitled to the same by the last will of Elbert Elbertse Stoothoff, their ancestor, dated Dec. 18th, 1686, in which he bequeathed said island to his eldest son Gerret, and after his death to his child or children in succession, and on failure of succession, to Gerret's two sisters, Heyltie and Aegje, and in case of their death, upon their child or children, and in case of failure of them, then upon his nearest relations in blood, stating, that it was his express will and desire, that the same should not go out of his family or generation, but should remain forever hereditary therein. After the decease of Elbert Elbertse, Gerret went into possession and by his (Gerret's) will devised the island (supposing he had a legal right), to Wilhelmus, one of his younger sons. However, Elbert, Gerret's eldest son, entered on the island on his father's death, and put his eldest son, Gerret, in possession, who died (being accidentally drowned in the bay), during his father's life

## The Bergen's Island Homestead

time, leaving issue three daus., viz; Eitie or Margrietie, Annatie, and Saartie, plaintiffs together with their husbands in this suit. After the death of Gerret, Elbert his father put his second son Wilhelmus in possession, and on Elbert's death, Wilhelmus, the second son delivered up possession to his uncle Wilhelmus, a defendant in this suit, who died in 1783, during its progress. On the death of the uncle Wilhelmus, his son Peter went into possession."

"This suit was finally decided on the 3rd. of Sept, 1791, (about 27 years after its commencement), in favor of the plaintiffs, thus declaring the entailment by Elbert Elbertse to be lawful, but before its termination, Eitie or Margrietie died without issue, leaving her two sisters her heirs at law."

"On the 5th. of September, Tunis Bergen went to the island and dispossessed Peter Stoothoff, who was in possession, leaving his son John Bergen in charge. On his claim for rent, while unlawfully deprived the use of the premises, the arbitrators, who were selected by the parties, awarded him on the 25th. of June, 1792 £445, which was paid in instalments, by William and Johannes, sons of Wilhelmus Stoothoff. After the termination of the suit, on the 10th. of May 1792, Tunis Bergen for £800, bought of John Stevens and Saartie, his wife, of Bybury, Penn, their undivided half of the island."

"On his death, Tunis Bergen left his island at Flatlands to his son John, who then occupied it. The Bergen Book says: 'Johannes or John Bergen, born Sept. 23rd. 1764; died August 12th. 1824, of typhus fever; married April 23d. 1793, Rebecca, daughter of Samuel Stryker, born Jan. 8th. 1774, died Jan. 28th. 1850.'"

When John Bergen took possession of Bergen's Island on September 5th, 1791, in the name of his father, he had with him a negro slave, Tone. For about a year they kept bachelor's hall together, then he secured the services of a man and his wife. Their names were Mr. and Mrs. Folkert Sprung, who had been exiled Tories. They stayed with Mr. Bergen until after his marriage. From various records it would seem that he was rather hot tempered. He led in several reform movements against the military discipline of the day, in which time and history justified him. All in all, it seems he was a man honored and respected by all.

I will quote Bergen again. "The house on the island occupied by the

## The Bergen's Island Homestead

Stoothoffs, which forms part of the present dwelling, from appearances may have been the first erected there. In 1801, John Bergen added to it for a kitchen, the wing on its easterly side, and afterwards, in 1819, enlarged the main building on the westerly side. A westerly wing was built by his son, Cornelius, after the death of his father."

John Bergen and Rebecca Stryker, his wife, had issue in order of birth: Tunis; Maria; Cornelius; Maria the first of that name having died; John; Johanna; Ann and Garret.

Cornelius Bergen, born February 20th, 1798; married March 10th, 1825, Francis daughter of Abijah Baldwin, of Flatlands. Owned and resided on Bergen's Island. Was ensign of militia, March 17th, 1821, and afterwards lieutenant. In 1823 was appointed Justice of the Peace, and in 1825 was elected Coroner. Died March 31st, 1865, leaving issue:

(1). John C. Bergen, born January 19th, 1826; married Mary T. Brower. He owned Bergen's Island until 1893, when he sold it to speculators, who opened an amusement park there and cut it up into building lots under the name of Bergen Beach, by which name it is best known. Mr. Bergen bought of his uncle, Garret Bergen, a farm on the Mill Lane, Flatlands, where he lived for many years. He resided in Bay Ridge the latter part of his life, dying about three years ago. He possessed all the virtues of which the Long Island Dutchmen speak with pride as belonging particularly to their race. He was connected with the Dutch Reformed Church of Flatlands all his life, and no man was more seriously missed than he. A kindly gentleman of the noblest type.

(2). Mary C. Bergen, born March 31st, 1828; married October 11th, 1847, Daniel Van Brunt of Bay Ridge, a son of Captain Jaques Van Brunt. Of all the descendants of the pioneer Dutchmen who settled this state in the early part of the seventeenth century, I know of no one who possesses the grace of friendship which we like to attribute to them as does Mrs. Van Brunt. She resides in Bay Ridge, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, who though grown and in most cases married, live near her. Age is sweet, when we can say, as we do now of this brother and sister, Mrs. Van Brunt and Mr. Bergen, that they grow nearer, dearer and more necessary to their friends as they grow older. I count it a privilege to have known them.





The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead, erected in 1800



## The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead

Extending from Kings Highway south is a level stretch of fertile land which reaches to the bay. On the west of it is the Strome Kil now called Garretson's Creek and Mill Pond, and on the east it is divided by Flatbush Avenue from the eastern part of town. All this land at one time was owned by two families, namely, the Lotts and Wyckoffs. Embracing fine soil, it was no wonder that these people were able to acquire large land holdings, and occupy prominent positions in the town.

About two hundred feet west of Flatbush Avenue on the Kings Highway, is a road which in early times was called the Road to Lott's Landing, later degenerating into Lott's Lane, and now called on all authorized maps Kimbell's Road. Half way down this lane to Lott's Landing, now a thriving fishing village called Hemlock City, stands a stately mansion, which at one time in its history was the finest country house in Kings County. Here, in the early part of the century, the people of the city drove to see the house and the well laid-out grounds, which were kept in a perfect state of cultivation.

But we are going back to the days of the common ancestors, and tracing the line of men and women who for nearly two hundred years have lived on this land. In 1652 Pieter Lot came to this country. We suppose Ruinerwold in Drenthe, Netherlands, to have been his home across the sea. He settled in Flatbush and married Gertrude, whose last name is unknown, but who died in 1704.

Pieter Lot was the father of Hendrick Lott, of Flatlands, who at one time resided in Jamaica. He married Katrena De Witt, who was born May 10th, 1654, and lived as late as 1701. They had issue: Doroty, born December 14th, 1686; Gertruy, born May 4th, 1688; Pieter, born March 4th, 1691; Johannes, born May 11th, 1692, died April 8th, 1775; Maria, born October 30th, 1693; and Antie, born August 23rd, 1696; married Folkert Folkersen.

I have not been able to prove to whom Johannes Lott was married. Most of the church records of the period are lost, and other records are of little value. Some of his descendants believe he married Antije Folkersen, a sister probably of Folkert Folkersen. This seems to be true to me. A brother and sister marrying a brother and sister is nothing unusual.

Johannes Lott purchased the farm, of which this house was the homestead, for £2100, of Coert Voorhies, on December 12th, 1719, being the land

## The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead

he (Voorhies) had secured June 10th, 1711, of Roeloff and Albert Terhuynnen, and formerly of the heirs of Garret Coerte, and which the said Garret Coerte had purchased of Coert Stevense on October 9th, 1699, and which Coert Stevense had bought of Abram Jooris on October 8th, 1687. All the conveyances relating to this property are on record in Kings County, and since the taking possession by Johannes Lott on December 12th, 1719, but two deeds affect the title to the homestead, one a deed from father to son, and a partition deed of joint heirs.

Johannes Lott lived and died on this farm, adding to it by purchase until on his death he owned three farms in Flatlands, one of which he left to each of his three surviving sons. He likewise owned a part of Barren Island and all the meadows bounded westerly by Garretsen's Creek, northerly by the upland, and easterly by Mill Island and upland, southerly by Barren Island.

Johannes Lott was Colonel of the Kings County Militia, and rendered service to the colonies in the French and Indian War. I have been unable to prove whether he was this Johannes or his son, but it is a fact that it was either the one or the other.

He had issue:

Hendrick I. Lott, of New Jamaica, born November 7th, 1715; married Rebecca, daughter of John Van Kirk;

Joris Lott, of New Utrecht, born October 3rd, 1717; died August 26th, 1762; married April, 1737, Maria, daughter of Rutgert Van Brunt;

Katrina Lott, born October 22nd, 1719; died August 13th, 1769; married April 21st, 1744, Derick Remsen:

Johannes Lott, Jr., of whom we will speak later; Maria Lott, born March 7th, 1722; died January 22nd, 1804; married 1756, Carel Boerum;

Petrus Lott, of Flatlands, born November 20th, 1723; married June 22nd, 1745, Marretje Dorlandt. Nieltien, born November 13th, 1730; married Jacob Snedeker; Nichlaes, who died young; Nichlaes, born September 13th, 1728; died January 24th, 1766;

Folkert Lott, born October 5th, 1732; died April 1st, 1763;

Antie Lott, born March 19th, 1736-7; married 1759, Stephen Lott; Dortie Lott, born April 10th, 1740; married 1759 to John Van Leuwen;

## The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead

and Jeromus Lott, of Flatlands, born January 26th, 1742-3; died February 19th, 1794; married 1763, Lammetie Rapalje, born May 29th, 1743; died October 16th, 1825.

Johannes Lott, Jr., was born December 31st, 1721; died January 25th, 1782; married Jannetje Probasco on April 6th, 1745. She died October 28th, 1802, and had issue:

Anne Lott, born April 14th, 1746; died May 11th, 1746; Anne Lott, born September 14th, 1747; died February 25th, 1829; married in 1782 to Henry Staats, of Albany; Jurrian Lott, born March 10th, 1750; died November 27th, 1800, no issue; Johannes I. Lott, of Flatlands, born November 15th, 1752; died March 2nd, 1807; (Sup.) married Itie or Margaret Van Nuyse; Cathaline Lott, born February 13th, 1755; died April 25th, 1842; married Ulpius Van Sinderin; Christopher Lott, born January 28th, 1758; died February 3rd, 1803; married Elizabeth Brownjohn, of New York; Hendrick I. Lott, of whom we will speak later. Jannetje Lott, born May 2nd, 1764; died October 28th, 1832.

Hendrick I. Lott, who inherited the homestead farm in Flatlands, was born October 3rd, 1760, and died February 24th, 1840. He was married on July 15th, 1792, to Mary Brownjohn by the Rev. Gerard Kuypers, his brother Christopher having previously married her sister Elizabeth. They were daughters of Doctor Thomas Brownjohn and Elizabeth Campbell, his wife. He was a son of Doctor William Brownjohn, whose house stood on Hanover Square, a few feet from Wall Street. The yard appears to have included the corner of Wall Street and Hanover Square, now Wall and Water Streets. He owned a large amount of real estate in that vicinity, including warehouses and residences which he let, and land under water in the East River where the Wall Street Ferry House now stands. This land was sold at auction by Gabriel William Ludlow, his executor, between 1790 and 1795, realizing over \$160,000 for this real estate.

During the Revolution the window weights were taken from Doctor Brownjohn's residence to make bullets for the Continental Army. The Brownjohn's family vault may be seen in Trinity Churchyard, where all the original members of the family are buried. Mrs. Lott died September 7th, 1853, in her 83rd year. She had a sister, Catharine Brownjohn, who

## The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead

married John Vernon, the leading silversmith of New York in his day. Mrs. Vernon died September 10th, 1855, in her 82nd year. They and their husbands are buried in the Flatbush Churchyard.

Hendrick I. Lott and his wife lived for a time in the old Flatlands Homestead, which stood at the side of the present house and close to Lott's Lane. In 1800 they built the present structure and moved in, and then they moved the diningroom and kitchen wing of the old house up to the side of the new house and made them fast. Thus the right wing, as you look at the picture, is a part of the old house, dating back perhaps more than two centuries. There was formerly a formal Dutch garden in front of the house, and the place was well fenced.

It is interesting to note that the original shingle roof still protects the house, and the house is standing as firm as a rock, ready to stand another hundred years, if her owners so will it. It is to be hoped they will, for where can you find a home of better, purer, nobler design among the modern houses which have been erected in Flatlands? Architects are realizing the virtues in the designs of years ago and are returning to them. But far too many machine-made, slave-designed houses are being erected, that are not homes, but automatic places of habitation constructed without taste and without thought, save of profit.

Hendrick I. Lott, of Flatlands, had issue:

Johannes H. Lott, of Flatlands, born August 20th, 1793; died February 26th, 1874; married December 28th, 1817, to Gashe, daughter of Simon Bergen, of Gowanus; Eliza Lott, born October 25th, 1796; married March 25th, 1818, Doctor Adrian Vanderveer, of Flatbush; and Catharine Lott, born August 11th, 1814; died May 8th, 1859; married April 2nd, 1834, Teunis J. Bergen.

Johannes H. Lott, as stated above, married Gashe Bergen, who was born July 24th, 1797, and died January 21st, 1883. She was loved and respected by all who knew her, as a lady of refinement and culture, whose kindly disposition led to the love of her numerous descendants. She inherited one-half of her father's farm, which she sold to John F. Delaplaine.

They had issue:

Jane Bergen Lott, born August 6th, 1819; died October 17th, 1873;

## The Hendrick I. Lott Homestead

married May 20th, 1847, Charles Burr Ditmas, born February 13th, 1813; died June 18th, 1852. They were the parents of two children; Andrew Ditmas, father of the compiler of this book, and Henry L. Ditmas, who died in infancy;

Henry De Witt Lott, born June 21st, 1821; died January 25th, 1889; married Annie Bennett, October 28th, 1863. They were the parents of eleven children, nine of whom survive, namely: Henry De Witt Lott, of Flushing; John B. Lott, who resides with his family in a part of the homestead; Jane M. Lott, now Mrs. Suydam, with her family live in another part of the homestead; Gacie Bergen Lott, now Mrs. Schoonmaker; Mary V. Lott, now Mrs. Kouwenhoven; George Lott, who resides with his brother John in the homestead; Edward D. Lott, of Flushing; Addie Lott, now Mrs. Ryder; and Phebe Lott, now Mrs. Suydam. Mrs. Lott was a daughter of John C. Bennett, of New Utrecht, and died September 1st, 1882.

Mary Lott, born December 26th, 1823; died in 1901. She married John W. Vanderveer, who died on February 24th, 1887, and they were the parents of John Vanderveer of Babylon;

Catherine Ann Lott, born December 2nd, 1825, married first Chauncey Drummond, by whom she had one son, Chauncey Drummond; and married second Samuel L. Clapp, by whom she had four children, namely: Harry Brownjohn Clapp, Fannie Clapp, Frank Clapp and Lewis S. Clapp. Mrs. Clapp died February 9th, 1895;

Eliza Lott, born July 17th, 1828; died in 1902; married Byron Whitcomb who died this year. They are the parents of five children: Lucy G. Whitcomb, wife of Jurien S. Lott, of Flatlands. Bertha E. Whitcomb, who died in the fall of 1906; George B. Whitcomb, a bachelor; John Carter Whitcomb, married and has three children, and is a successful farmer in Flatlands; Jurien L. Whitcomb, a bachelor;

Simon Bergen Lott, was born October 23rd, 1830, and died August 14th, 1908. He married on March 28th, 1861, Martha Jane Van Cleef, a daughter of John H. Van Cleef. She was born on January 31st, 1837, and died April 23rd, 1892. They were the parents of three children, namely: Jurien S. Lott, John R. Lott and Sara Lott.

Jurien Lott, born March 10th, 1835, and is now deceased.



The Johannes Emmans Homestead

## The Johannes Emmans Homestead

In the town of Flatlands, now the 32nd Ward of the Borough of Brooklyn, are many of the old historic homesteads, which it is the object of your author to picture and describe. A general description of the topography of the old highways of this section of Kings County is given in another chapter; I am now writing about an old and interesting farm house situated a little distance from Kouwenhoven Place, just out of the village. It was for a number of years the abode of a family by the name of Emmans, but, I believe, it was originally owned by Jeremiah Vanderbilt.

Roelof Voorhees owned a farm adjoining, and left it to his grandson, Johannes Ditmars. Johannes Ditmars married first Margrietie Rapalje, on December 12th, 1781, and she bore him two children; a son, John Ditmars, and a daughter, Margaret Ditmars. Mrs. Ditmars died January 10th, 1785. Johannes Ditmars married a second time, but died without further issue. In his will, recorded April 27th, 1795, in Liber I, page 182, Kings County Surrogates Office, an abstract of which is in my possession, he gives to his daughter, Margaret Ditmars, £200, with which to purchase an outfit; also, the farm of the late Roelof Voorhees with the meadows and woodland thereto belonging, except the one-fourth part, which he had contracted to give William Kouwenhoven.

Margaret Ditmars married Johannes Emmans, of New Utrecht, who had purchased the farm which we are chronicling. I have not been able to find a record of this purchase, but it is a well authenticated fact that he owned it, but from whom he purchased it I can not find out. It appears to be the farm owned at one time by Jeremiah Vanderbilt. As the Emmans are one of our most interesting families, I will here trace Johannes Emmans' family.

His father was Johannes Emmans, of New Utrecht, who married, in 1768, Mary Wyckoff. He died on January 8th, 1780, and his widow remarried March 8th, 1783, Nicholas Van Brunt, of Bay Ridge, who had been imprisoned for favoring the American cause, and had been Lieutenant of a company which had reinforced the Continental Army during the Battle of Long Island. Mr. and Mrs. Van Brunt died of malignant fever in 1802.

## The Johannes Emmans Homestead

This Johannes Emmans was a son of Adries Emmans, of New Utrecht, who married Femmetje Dorlant, and died about 1760. He purchased of Samuel Groenendyck a farm of 84 acres on which he resided. He was a son of Andries Emmans, Jr., of Gravesend and New Utrecht. Born in 1677, and married November 24th, 1693, to Rebecca Van Cleef, of Gravesend. He bought, July 20th, 1708, of Stoffel Romeyne, a farm in New Utrecht, on which he afterwards lived. I suppose he died in 1728. His father, Adries Emmans, Sr., was the common ancestor of the Long Island and New Jersey Emmans. Unlike most of the early settlers of these parts he was an Englishman, but had found refuge from religious persecution in Leyden, in the Netherlands. He came to this country in the ship Saint Jean Baptist, May 9th, 1661, and made a home for his family in Gravesend.

Margaret Ditmars and Johannes Emmans, her husband, took up their abode in the charming old homestead on his farm. They lived a quiet, rural life, full of usefulness and joy, and here were born their children. The following is the record of their issue:

Margaret Emmans, married Nicholas Williamson, and had a son, Steven Williamson.

John Emmans, married a widow whose name I have been unable to ascertain, and had issue two daughters; namely, Margaret Emmans, who married John I. Snedcor, and Sarah Emmans, who married Joseph Flemming.

Ditmas, Albert and Andrew Emmans were bachelors.

Nicholas Emmans, who married a Miss Baisley, had three children; namely, Nicholas, John and David.

Maria Emmans, married John B. Napier, and had issue eight children. Three of these children survive; namely, Miss Catherine B. Napier, Thomas and Charles. All of these live at Woodhaven, Queen's County, New York City. The names of Mr. and Mrs. Napier's children, who have passed away are: John, Andrew, Anna, Margaret who died in babyhood, and Margaret a twin sister of Catharine.

Phebe Emmans died young.

By a partition sale in the Court of Chancery, Andrew and Albert Emmans bought their father's farm on May 9th, 1839. On April 5th, 1844,



## The Johannes Emmans Homestead

Andrew released his interest to his brother Albert. On the death of Albert it became the property of his brothers' and sisters' children. They sold a large part of it, including the homestead, to Wood, Harmon & Company, who are the present owners.



The Johannes Van Nuyse House, erected before 1806

## The Johannes Van Nuyse Homestead\*

This house is now occupied by Mr. George M. Henderson, who had the wisdom to restore it as nearly as possible to its original design. He obtained the property from Frederick Magaw, Esq., whose father, the late Robert Magaw, purchased it from the heirs of Jeromus Van Nuyse. The farm of which this is the homestead originally extended to the old Kings Highway, between Flatlands and Flatbush. It embraced the George Van Nuyse farm as well, and the original homestead, I believe, stood near the old road, possibly near the George Van Nuyse house, as Johannes Van Nuyse is credited with living in and owning an old house on the Flatbush Road, worth in 1796, \$350, and in middling condition. Still that could not have been a bad sort of a house, for according to the same valuation the finest house in town was only worth \$900. He is credited with owning some 85 acres of land, while his brother occupied a place of some 39 acres. As he purchased some land of Wilhelmus Van Nuyse, I suppose this covered the property. This farm was originally a part of the land of Elbert Elbertse Stoothoff, and at his death became the property of Thomas Willetts, who sold it to the Terhune family. I have not been able to find at what date they sold it to the Van Nuyses, but it seems to have been about 1725.

When this house was erected we know only from tradition, which is as follows: "The house was completed after several years in construction and the family moved in. Then the barn was started. On the day the barn was raised, all the neighbors came to help, and the ladies prepared a bountiful feast, as was customary among the Dutch. The meal was served on tables on the lawn, and as it was George Van Nuyse's fourth birthday, his aunts, to surprise his mother, made a pair of pants and an outfit of boy's clothes for him. They dressed him and seated him at one of the tables unknown to his mother. She did not recognize him as her own son, nor could she surmise whose child he was. As she was helping him to cake, she asked, 'Whose little boy are you, my little man?' He did not see the humorous side of the mistake, but bursting into tears, said: 'Mother, don't youse know me?' " This story has been handed down from mother to child until the present

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\*Since the writing of this sketch, a large part of this farm has been opened up for building purposes by Wood, Harmon & Company, and it promises to develop into one of the finest residential sections of Flatbush.

## The Johannes Van Nuyse Homestead

generation. I believe it is true, for Mrs. Couwenhoven, a younger sister of George Van Nuyse, told me some years ago, when she was about 84 years of age, that she remembered hearing her mother tell it as I have written it here. If it is true, it must have occurred on September 10th, 1806.

The house was completed previous to this, and was constructed on this spot from timber cut in the adjacent forest. As it took, at that time, at least three years to finish a house of this size, I am inclined to believe that it was started shortly after Johannes Van Nuyse's marriage to Nelly Lott, a daughter of Colonel Jeromus Lott, of Flatlands.

They had a large family, namely:

George Van Nuyse, born September 10th, 1802; died September 11th, 1831; married, April 12th, 1827, Margaret, daughter of John Ditmars, born August 13th, 1803; died December 19th, 1865. They had one child, Cornelia Ditmars Van Nuyse, born January 29th, 1829; died May 15th, 1862; married John Holmes Van Brunt. She was the grandmother of your compiler.

Jeromus Van Nuyse, born January 2nd, 1805; died September 29th, 1852; married Ann Eliza Brinkerhoff, born May 8th, 1813. Left no issue.

Eliza Van Nuyse, born May 11th, 1807; married May 28th, 1828, Adrian Bergen, of New Utrecht.

Lemma Van Nuyse, born July 24th, 1809; married December 29th, 1835, Cornelius Suydam, of Flatbush. They had issue several children, of whom John and Ellen Suydam survive.

Maria Van Nuyse, born March 24th, 1810; died September 1st, 1863, single.

Eleanor Van Nuyse, born January 15th, 1813; died January 25th, 1853; married Tunis Bergen, of New Utrecht.

Magdalen Van Nuyse; born September 23rd, 1816; married December 28th, 1842, Garret Couwenhoven, of New Utrecht. Both are deceased. They had issue: Maria, who married Isaac C. Barnes; Nettie, who married Theodore V. Bergen; Ellen, who married Charles M. Bergen, of Babylon, and Garret Couwenhoven.

We now return to Johannes Van Nuyse and trace his ancestry back, and in so doing trace the ownership of this farm. This farm lay in what

## The Johannes Van Nuyse Homestead

was called a flat, that is, it was level land, and part of it was laid out as a race-course. We find many notices of races held here during the Revolution. It went under the name of Ascot Heath, after England's famous track. We understand that this course was the most notable in New York State at that time.

The father of Johannes was Joost Van Nuyse, of Flatlands, baptized September 16th, 1716; died about 1792; married April 26th, 1744, Elizabeth Emmans. He was the first Van Nuyse to reside on this farm. His father was William, of New Utrecht, and his mother was Magdalena Joost, wife of the above. He, in turn, was the son of Jacobus Aukersz, who at one period resided in Flatbush, but lived the greater part of his life in New Utrecht. He married April 26th, 1685, Maria or Marie Willemse. He was a son of the common ancestor, Aucke Jansen Van Nuyse, and Magdalena Pietersen his first wife, who emigrated from Amsterdam in 1651 to New Amsterdam. He followed the trade of master carpenter, and waxed rich in that profession. In 1654 he erected the first church in Flatbush. He possessed a knowledge of law, and was magistrate of Flatbush in 1673, and also a Representative in the Convention of March 26th, 1673, which conferred with Governor Colve.

He is supposed to have been born in Nuis, in Groningen, Netherlands, a city of about 500 inhabitants. He married three times, the last two failing of issue. Like many others who came to the new world, he died a rich landholder.



**The Rem Hegeman Homestead**

## The Rem Hegeman Homestead

There is an old house in Flatlands which has been in a dilapidated condition for many years, but has attracted the attention of almost all who passed by for its picturesque beauty and symmetrical proportions. It seems to be of great age, for it has all the characteristics of the 18th century. I believe it is one of perhaps a dozen houses in Kings County which are very old. The general construction is of the Old Style; the half door with bull's-eye windows, the broad beamed roof extending far out, the closeness to the ground of the wooden structure, all bespeak age.

The heirs of Jeffries Van Wyck are the present owners of this interesting house and the surrounding land. They bought it of the executors of the estate of Rem Hegeman on October 16th, 1869. The property embraces one of the most valuable corners in the Thirty-second Ward, namely, the south-east corner of Flatbush Avenue and Kings Highway or the Neck Road, as this section of it was sometimes called. This crossing has always been the center of the village life of Flatlands. Across the road was Hendricksen's store, kept by one family for over sixty-six years, and it was all that time the leading store of the southern part of the county. It also contained the post office, and here Court was held and justice honestly administered.

This house, situated so close to the church, post office, and the center of activities of the time and of the town, must have been the scene of many interesting events, and if we could picture by pen those local dramas, they would be more interesting than fiction, and we would be surprised to find the people of Flatlands more progressive for their day and generation than are their descendants to-day. I believe their superior deportment was due to their military training, for nearly every man belonged to the company of militia in the town of which he was an inhabitant.

This house was the home of Rem Hegeman, a farmer, who was a frequent purchaser of small plots of land and meadows. He evidently had a speculative tendency and his judgment seems to have been good, for he generally sold his purchases for more than he had given. He purchased this farm from Nicholas Van Dyke on May 2nd, 1836. Van Dyke had secured it from other members of his family on April 23rd, 1829. The last owner of whom we have record previous to Van Dyke was Herman Hogeland, who acquired it by two purchases; one on January 19th, 1722, when he purchased of Jan

## The Rem Hegeman Homestead

Lucassen and Johannes Voorhees a tract they had acquired from Coert Stevense, who had purchased it of Garret Coerte on October 9th, 1699. Hoogland or Hogeland had previously purchased the land of Albjdaj Hoogland and Arent Schuyler on November 27th, 1707.

This property comes within the boundary of the patent of June 6th, 1636, to Andrew Hudden and Wolphert Garretsen, and later came into possession of Elbert Elbertse, whose heirs divided it up into farms and sold them. It, with all other land in Flatlands, went into the hands of the arbitrators, who proved the title and returned the property to its respective owner on the 13th day of February, 1695.

Rem Hegeman was a descendant of Adriaen Hegeman, who came to this country in 1650 or 1651, and held numerous public offices, including that of Schout Fiscall of the Five Dutch Towns.

Rem Hegeman was born at Flatlands, April 23rd, 1795, and died there on March 2nd, 1867. He married Helen Wyckoff, and they had the following children:

Peter Hegeman, of whom I have no trace.

Sarah Ann Hegeman, married John C. Vanderveer, who at one time was keeper of the Kings County Alms House, and was a son of Cornelius Vanderveer and Maria Eldert, his wife, and a grandson of John C. Vanderveer, the Flatbush statesman, and great-grandson of Captain Cornelius Vanderveer, Flatbush's Hero of the Revolution. They died without issue.

Helen Hegeman, married Jacob Stillenwerf; I think they resided in New Jersey, but have no further trace.

Catharine Hegeman, married William Tate, and had several children.

John G. Hegeman, born at Flatlands, March 23rd, 1816, and died there October 29th, 1845. He married Charlotte O. Rogers, who was born at New London, Conn., on July 8th, 1819, and died at Brooklyn, New York, on June 15th, 1898. They had three children; namely, William R., Abbey, and John R.

William Rogers Hegeman was born December 7th, 1841, and died November 9th, 1897. He married Miss Johnson, of Canarsie, and has several children. During the latter part of his life he was a successful merchant of Brooklyn.



## The Rem Hegeman Homestead

John Rogers Hegeman was born at Flatlands, on April 18th, 1844. He has led a notable career in the financial world. In 1866 he became an accountant for the Manhattan Life Insurance Company; in June, 1870, was made Secretary of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and was elected Vice-President in October of the same year. In October, 1891, he became President of the Company of which he had been Vice-President for twenty-one years, and to him, in a large measure, is due the success of that company. Their business is largely Industrial Insurance, and requires men of trust and those in whom unbounded confidence can be placed. Mr. Hegeman is a great worker, finding time to attend to the details of business which other men are compelled to turn over to subalterns. He is connected with many other financial enterprises in an official capacity.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company own and occupy a building in New York, the tower of which is the tallest office structure in the world. It is a fitting monument of a great enterprise.

Mr. Hegeman has been a credit to his family, and it is an honor for any man to bear as time-honored and respectable a name as that of Hegeman. He was born in a comfortable farm house, and what better start in life should a man desire? He married Evelyn Lyons, and has one son, John R. Hegeman, Jr. Mamaroneck is his present place of abode.



The Bloom-Lefferts Homestead, erected before the Revolution

## The Bloom-Lefferts Homestead

For many years the passerby has looked upon No. 1224 Fulton Street as a doomed house; doomed soon to be pulled down. Much has been written in the papers recently about preserving this and other relics of the days gone by, but to no apparent avail, for now this house, once a charming home, is no more. The Dutch were builders of pure architectural structures, designers of perfect taste, engineers of adequate proportion and strength, and in this house we find a perfect example of their work, although it has stood alterations by an English army officer.

The compiler has been unable to find any record of when it was built, but it is safe to say it was erected previous to 1750. The first owner of this farm I am told that there is any record of, was Claes Barentse Bloom, who conveyed it to his son, Brant, in 1704; of this I cannot say from personal knowledge, but I believe it to be true. Brant in 1756 left it to his son, Nicholas, whose executives conveyed it in 1785 to Charles Turnbull.

Charles Turnbull was an officer of the British Army. History tells us he rebuilt the house, although I believe he only put dormer windows in the roof, but history should be believed. Turnbull did not enjoy his home long, for he conveyed it in 1791 to Leffert Lefferts, whose son, John, occupied it.

Leffert Lefferts was born March 14th, 1727, and died July 10th, 1804. He left this part of his farm to his son, John, who was then its occupant. Leffert Lefferts married August 5th, 1746, Dorothy Couwenhoven, who was born February 8th, 1738, and died August 17th, 1816. He was a farmer at Bedford, his house being located on the southwest corner of Clove Road and Jamaica Turnpike, now Brevoort Place and Fulton Street. It was occupied during 1776-1783 as headquarters by the British General, Gray.

John L. Lefferts, born May 24th, 1763; died October 13th, 1812, and married April 25th, 1790, Sarah Couwenhoven, born December 28th, 1775; died April 1st, 1856. He owned and resided on the farm, of which this house was the homestead. On the death of John L. Lefferts, his youngest daughter, Cornelia, secured it. Cornelia Lefferts was born March 27th, 1811; died June 6th, 1857; married her cousin, Robert Benson Lefferts, son of John L. Lefferts, of New Utrecht. He was born September 9th, 1813, and died May 3rd, 1864. They were married February 20th, 1845, and left

## The Bloom-Lefferts Homestead

no issue. Mr. Lefferts was engaged in the mercantile business in New York from 1837 to 1856. Upon his marriage he resided in this house until after his wife's death, when he sold it. Thus this house passed from the Lefferts family into the Bently family in 1862, and again changed hands two years ago, when Mr. Greenman took title.

The house shows in what manner Fulton Street was straightened. It now stands at right angles to the road, whereas it formerly was parallel.

It is an interesting fact that Leffert Lefferts, who bought this land of Turnbull, was the fifth child of Jacobus Lefferts (Hagewout) born June 9th, 1689, and died September 3rd, 1768, and Jannetje Blom, his wife, October 7th, 1716, who was born January 18th, 1694, and was the daughter of Claes Barentse Blom, the original owner, who is supposed to have emigrated from Dortrecht, in the Netherlands. He married April 26th, 1685, Elizabeth Paulus, widow of Paulus Vandervoort, of Bedford. It is possible that this farm came with the widow. These facts show that descendants of the original owners were in possession until the Bentleys purchased it, with the exception of when Turnbull owned it. Jacobus Lefferts was the sixth child of Lefferts Pieterse, whom we suppose was born in 1645, and who married Abigail Van Nuyse. He was the son of Pieter Janse Hagewout, born we suppose in 1621. He was the son of Jan Hagewout, of Rouseen, in the Netherlands. We dwell to some extent on this family in the sketch on the John Lefferts Homestead.

The following children of John L. and Sarah C. Lefferts were born we understand, in the old homestead:

(1). Leffert Lefferts, born March 30th, 1791, ancestor of the Marshall Lefferts and kindred families.

(2). Ida Lefferts, born December 1st, 1794; died young.

(3). John R. Couwenhoven Lefferts, born March 1st, 1794; died young.

(4). Catharine Lefferts, born March 21st, 1797; married John Laideur, and has numerous issue.

(5). Nicholas R. Couwenhoven Lefferts, born March 28th, 1799; married and has numerous descendants around New Brunswick, N. J.

(6). Colonel James Lefferts, of New York; born March 1st, 1800.

## The Bloom-Lefferts Homestead

- (7). John Lefferts, born March 1st, 1804; died in youth.
- (8). Sarah Lefferts, born November 17th, or 27th, 1805; married A. Orville Millard, of Brooklyn, N. Y.
- (9). Rem Lefferts, born November 11th, 1807; married Martha Stratton.
- (10). Cornelia Lefferts, born March 27th, 1811.



The Henry S. Ditmas Homestead, erected before 1800

## The Henry S. Ditmas Homestead

When Mr. Henry Suydam Ditmas died on October 11th, 1884, he left his homestead with a part of the front on Flatbush Avenue, and a part of the farm to his only surviving son, John H. Ditmas, and the rest of his farm he left to his other heirs. The house stood as to-day with the exception that Mr. Ditmas has modernized and altered to some extent the structure. The front door is new, but I understand the back door is the original. This house does not show many of the marks of age, though it was built and for many years used for a Dutch farmhouse of the better class.

It was, until recently, the abode of the present owner, a man who has been a valued citizen in the community, and as such, this house, if for no other reason, should be entitled to veneration. The grounds around it have always been kept attractive, and those of us who remember when Flatbush Avenue was the choice residential street in town, can remember when this place was not the least attractive.

Mr. John H. Ditmas, the present owner, has spent an active and useful life within these walls. He was born here in September, 1830, and received his education at Erasmus Hall Academy, an institution of which he served as trustee. He entered business in 1847 in the importing line, and in 1857 became connected with the Long Island Bank. He was with this institution some forty years, advancing to the position of Cashier and later Vice-President. He was one of the founders, and is now Vice-President of the Flatbush Trust Company. He is actively connected with the Flatbush Boys' Club and the Dutch Reformed Church.

On October 5th, 1869, he married Miss Maria Kouwenhoven, a daughter of Cornelius Kouwenhoven and Mary Williamson, his wife. They were the parents of three children, one of whom survives; namely, Miss Mary Kouwenhoven Ditmas.

Mr. Ditmas, as has been stated, was a son of Henry Suydam Ditmas, who was born July 12th, 1798, and died as we have stated. He married Ann Schenck, a daughter of Teunis Schenck, and inherited the homestead of his father. He was prominent not only in town but in county as well. A man of action and of sterling virtues. The greatest Dutchman the world has known once said, "The man who never makes a mistake never does anything." I have yet to hear of Mr. Ditmas's mistake, and yet he was

## The Henry S. Ditmas Homestead

always doing something. He was President of Erasmus Hall during the most prosperous time in its career.

Mr. and Mrs. Ditmas had issue as follows:

Abraham Ditmas, who died before his father, and had married Sarah Ann, daughter of Jeremiah Ryder, of Gravesend. He had a daughter, Cornelia Ditmas, now the wife of Mr. William Longmire.

John H. Ditmas, before mentioned.

Jane Ann Ditmas, who married on January 7th, 1845, Gerret Martense, a lawyer of Flatbush, and son of Judge Gerret L. Martense and Jane Vanderveer, his wife. Of their issue a daughter survives; namely, Jennie Vanderveer Martense, who married Lionel Wilbur, and had issue Martense Wilbur, who died when a young man, and Miss Anna Wilbur.

Gertrude C. Ditmas, who married Christopher Prince, and had issue several children; and Maria Ditmas, who married Mr. John Z. Lott, a son of Judge John A. Lott. He is one of the most prominent members of the King's County Bar, and President of the Flatbush Trust Company, and largely responsible for the high standing of that institution in the world of finance. Mr. Lott is connected with many other enterprises of almost equal worth. He is the father of Henry Ditmas Lott and Erskin Howard Lott, both of whom are prominent residents of Flatbush. Mrs. Lott is deceased.

Mr. Ditmas was a trustee of Erasmus Hall from March 1st, 1823, to October 11th, 1884. He was a son of Abraham Ditmas, born February 5th, 1765; died August 13th, 1803, and Jane, daughter of Hendrick Suydam, his wife.

Abraham Ditmas was a trustee of Erasmus Hall Academy from October 17th, 1791, until his death. He inherited a half of his father's farm, and erected this house previous to 1800. He was the second son of Johannes Ditmars and was by his second wife. Abraham had two sons, John A. Ditmas being the other. He (John A. Ditmas) married Sarah Suydam, and had issue seven children, of whom only one survives; namely, Miss Jane Gertrude Ditmas, of Brooklyn. Abraham Ditmas also had two daughters; namely, Maria, who married Dr. William Creed, of Jamaica, and Rebecca, who married Theodorus Polhemus. She was the mother of Abraham Ditmas Polhemus, spoken of elsewhere in this volume.



## The Henry S. Ditmas Homestead

The father of Abraham Ditmas was Johannes Ditmars. He was a man of prominence in the community, and was the owner of many broad acres. He was married first to Lena Wyckoff, on May 17th, 1745; and second, in 1762, to Rebecca Staats, by whom Abraham was born. I have a large amount of evidence to show that he was a half-brother of Quartermaster Johannes Ditmas, although he calls him his brother when he appoints him executor of his will. In the old days blood was thicker than water, and people considered themselves related who, to-day, would not think so. These two men, sons of the same father, loved each other and trusted each other, therefore, what difference did it make to them if they were of different mothers, or for that matter related at all? They divided their father's farm into two parts, and lived during their lives as neighbors and friends.

Johannes Ditmars' father was known as Johannes Ditmarsen, who married Jannetje Remsen. He was an important man, and held several offices of trust. His father was Jan Jansen Van Ditmarsen, whose wife was Adrianna. He is supposed to have purchased the land where his homestead stands on April 24th, 1681, of Gerret Lubbertsen. He was a son of the common ancestor, Jan Jansen and Aeltje Douws, his wife, who emigrated to this country about 1637.

The family this old home has sheltered for so many years is large, and has numerous connections in New Jersey and in the West. I have collected a large amount of data relating to it, and hope soon to issue a genealogy of comprehensive size. Any information that any one may have will be given due consideration, if they will submit it.



The Suydam-Ditmas Homestead, erected before the Revolution

## The Suydam-Ditmas Homestead

The Reverend Johannes Theodorus Polhemus, who was the first minister of the churches in Kings County, obtained, June 25th, 1662, a patent for 25 morgans of land, to which he added by purchase on March 6th, 1674, of John Sebering an adjoining tract of 24 morgans, which Sebering bought of Cornelius Swailer, to whom it had been granted in 1662. Governor Andros granted a confirmatory patent for all this land December 25th, 1680, to Catharine, widow of Domine Polhemus. On December 19th, 1702, it was conveyed by his heirs to Daniel Polhemus.

In 1709, Engelbert Lott (the eldest son of Peter, the common ancestor) purchased from Daniel Polhemus and Neltje, his wife, the southerly one-third part of this farm, and lived there until his death, which we suppose occurred in 1728. Abraham Lott, his eldest son, born in September, 1684, married in 1709, Catherina Hegeman, from that time lived with his father and cultivated the farm. When his father died, Abraham Lott became the owner of his farm, and added to it by purchase the northerly two-thirds part of the Polhemus farm. He died on July 29th, 1754, and left the southerly one-third part of his farm to his son, Jacobus Lott, at whose death it was sold to Hendrick Suydam.

Hendrick Suydam was a descendant of Heyndrycke Rycken, the common ancestor, who emigrated from Suydam in 1663, and married Ida Jacobs. He finally settled in Flatbush, dying in 1701. Their son, Hendrick Suydam, of Bedford, died subsequently to 1743. He had by his wife, Bennetie, a son named Hendrick, who was born December 2nd, 1706. He married Geertie Ryerson, and died at Bedford, July 16th, 1768. His wife passed away on December 7th, 1770. They had a son, Hendrick Suydam, born in 1732. He married June 15th, 1753, Rebecca Emmans. In 1759, he purchased this farm of the heirs of Jacobus Lott, and resided here until his death, July 9th, 1805. His son, Captain Andrew Suydam, married Phebe Wyckoff, of Gravesend; his death occurred December 11th, 1831. Their only child, Sarah, married John Ditmas, son of Abraham Ditmas and a brother of Henry S. Ditmas. She was the mother of Abraham I. Ditmas and John Ditmas, Jr. The heirs of John Ditmas, Jr., still own the homestead, and a son of Abraham I. Ditmas lives in it.

## The Suydam-Ditmas Homestead

Another branch of the Suydam family is connected with this place through the Ditmas family. The mother of John Ditmas was Jane Suydam, who married Abraham Ditmas, his father. She was a daughter of Hendrick Suydam, born in 1730; died May 16th, 1791. His wife was Maria Amerman, born May 21st, 1735; died November 14th, 1795. This Hendrick was a son of Hendrick Suydam, baptized March 29th, 1696. He married Geertie Van Wicklen. He was a son of Jacob Suydam and Seytie Jacobs, his wife. Jacob was born in 1666, and died in 1738. He was a son of the common ancestor.





The Adrian Martense Homestead

## The Adrian Martense Homestead

On February 20th, 1889, Gertrude Prince, wife of John Duffield Prince, and daughter of George Martense, deceased; Mary Martense Prince, wife of John D. Prince, Jr., and daughter of Jacob V. B. Martense, deceased; Eliza Ann Martense, widow of Jacob Van Brunt Martense and Adrian Vanderveer Martense, their son, and Helen Martense, their daughter, sold the old Martense Homestead, which for many years had been occupied by tenants. It was an historic sale, and was the beginning of that great real estate movement which was to culminate in the high prices of to-day and of the still higher prices of the future. The purchaser was William Ziegler, and to-day the last semblance of farm life is being removed from this rural section. Within a stone's throw from this house are row after row of one and two-family brick houses. Only a short distance from three car lines, this centrally located property abounds with interest to the speculators, who have had the good taste to call the section by the old and honorable name of Martense.

Just beyond this house stands Greenwood Cemetery, a reminder of the time when all this land was open country and when this farm included a part of the cemetery. This was the main or homestead farm, which Adrian Martense left to his grandson, George Martense, when he died on March 13th, 1817. It was originally a part of one of the largest farms in Flatbush. This house was the homestead of the western division, as is related in the story of the old Martense-Story Homestead.

The Martense family has been one of the most prominent families in Flatbush, but unfortunately the name is now extinct as a surname, but the blood is in many veins. The common ancestor's name was not Martense, for this family are descendants of Adrian Reyerse, of Amsterdam, who emigrated to this country in 1646, and settled in Flatbush. He married July 29th, 1659, Annetje Martense, a daughter of Martin Roelofse Schenck, of Flatlands. Reyerse's death occurred November 24th, 1710.

Of his children, Martin Adriance was born March 9th, 1668; he died October 30th, 1754; married Sarah Remsen who was born December 1st, 1670; died April 30th, 1723. He was called "Martin de Boer" from the fact of his large farm. Some of his children adopted the name of Martense and others of Adriance.

## The Adrian Martense Homestead

Adrian Martense, a son of the above, was born October 24th, 1707, and died September 17th, 1780. Bergen says he married Neeltje whose last name is unknown, but Mrs. Prince in her history says he married Annetje Brinkerhoff, who was born July 22nd, 1706; both probably mean the same person, and both are correct from a genealogical point of view. Mrs. Prince's account gives us the missing link in the surname. They were the parents of Adrian Martense, of Flatbush, born December 9th, 1742; died March 13th, 1817; married November 3rd, 1765, to Adriaentje Ryder, born February 2nd, 1741; died May 27th, 1776. He married second Jenetje Montfort or Monfoor.

By his first marriage he had a son, Adrian, born August 17th, 1768, and died December 12th, 1830. He married Gertrude, daughter of Jacob Suydam, born January 25th, 1770; died January 9th, 1824. George Martense, their only son, inherited the homestead farm from his grandfather, Adrian Martense. George Martense was born July 18th, 1791; died August 18th, 1835; married, January 13th, 1818, Helen, daughter of Jacob Van Brunt, of Brooklyn. She was born October 22d, 1800; died November 9th, 1875.

They were the parents of Adrian and George Martense, both of whom died without issue, and of Jacob Van Brunt Martense, born February 20th, 1825; died December 16th, 1881, and married Eliza Ann, daughter of Doctor Adrian Vanderveer. She was born May 16th, 1821; died August 15th, 1906. Doctor Vanderveer was one of the noted physicians of Kings County, and was the founder of the Kings County Medical Society. He was born December 21st, 1796, and died July 5th, 1857. He married Eliza, daughter of Hendrick I. Lott and Mary Brownjohn, his wife. She was born October 28th, 1796; died May 1st, 1875, and married Dr. Vanderveer on March 25th, 1818.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Van Brunt Martense were the parents of Adrian Vanderveer Martense, born November 5th, 1852; died January 3rd, 1898; married Ellen Brown; and of Mary Martense, born April 22nd, 1861, who married Mr. John Duffield Prince, Jr.; also of Eliza Martense, born December 15th, 1847; died November 4th, 1874; George Martense, born July 21st, 1850; died April 20th, 1852; and of Helen Martense, born September 20th, 1857; died August 5th, 1893.



## The Adrian Martense Homestead

The other children of Mr. and Mrs. George Martense were: Gertrude Martense, who married John Duffield Prince, and Miss Hester Martense, who never married.

This farm was for many years cultivated by the Berry family. John F. Berry, one of this family, is the President of the New Utrecht Liberty Pole Association, and is connected with many patriotic associations. The last Martense to live here and cultivate this farm was Jacob Van Brunt Martence. This place has witnessed stirring scenes. I do not believe this house stood during the Revolution, but it was built soon after. Before its door passes old Martense Lane, through which the British and Hessian soldiers passed in their attack upon Lord Stirling's right wing of the American Army, who were holding ground on the hills of Greenwood Cemetery.

This very yard, these fields, must have been the scene of some of the skirmishes. This house, had it stood here, and its builder's home must have been near, would have been the center of the scenes of activities where our forefathers acquitted themselves nobly. To me the most thrilling scene of history is that part of the Battle of Long Island fought near this spot, where the brave men of Maryland fought so nobly, and where the Battle of Long Island was won. Five thousand American farmers and tradesmen had defeated the flower of proud England's Army, reinforced by the vassals of Germany to the number of 15,000.

Victory was ours; when suddenly Lord Stirling heard firing to the northeast, Washington, too, heard it from the ramparts on Brooklyn Heights. Sullivan's men were surrounded. Stirling knew his duty and tried to retreat, but he was already beset. With 15,000 of the enemy before him, and 10,000 behind, 5,000 American soldiers attempted to cut their way through. Reinforcements from Brooklyn Heights tried to aid them, but in vain. Company after company forced their way through shattered in ranks, but 3,000 men fought until the last drop of blood was shed or they were disarmed. General Washington stood on the ramparts, peering through the dimness, the scattered troops were coming through the fog, and he was heard to utter, "Good God, what brave fellows I must this day lose!"

## Heirlooms

In a catalogue of "Articles of Ye Olden Time" exhibited at the Midwood Club in 1896, we find many interesting subjects loaned by members of the old families. I regret that I am not able to publish the catalogue complete as a part of this book, but I may include it with some note in another book of "More Historic Homesteads of Kings County." In that list are many heirlooms loaned by the late Mrs. Jacob V. B. Martense and Mrs. Prince.

No. 173d is a "Foot Stove," used in the Martense family. And many other heirlooms are listed such as a Lace Veil worn in 1790. Exhibited at the World's Fair, Chicago, in 1893. Pictures depicting the Legend of Martense Lane and Old Joost. A portrait of Elizabeth Campbell, the grandmother of Mrs. Doctor Vanderveer. Her Silver Tea Set and Silver Porringer. A Spinning Wheel which belonged to a New York belle, and many other articles including the Family Bibles.

This list should form the basis of a permanent collection to be gathered together and preserved in one of the old homesteads as a Museum of History, that we may know how our ancestors lived, and that we may study the past with the idea of future improvement of our condition and customs.





The John Lefferts Homestead, erected previous to, and rebuilt during the  
Revolution

## The John Lefferts Homestead

No one can estimate the good this historic structure has accomplished. Situated at the gateway to Flatbush, the tired man of business, wearily riding home at dusk, sees first, as he enters Flatbush, this beautiful old Dutch house, nestling low down in a group of grand old maples, and his tired mind finds refreshing thoughts of the suburban home to which he is going, of the quaint old town, cooler in summer and warmer in winter than Brooklyn, with its society as old as New York's Knickerbocker stock.

To-day a scion of this old family occupies the homestead; in fact, members of the Lefferts family have occupied this land since it was granted to Lefferts Pietersen van Hagewout, founder of the Lefferts family. He married Abigail Van Nuyse, daughter of Aucke Janse, founder of the Van Nuyse family. He is spoken of elsewhere in this book. Leffert's death occurred December 8th, 1704. As he came to this country with his parents, Pieter Janse and Femmetje Hermens, in 1660, he must have died in the prime of life. An examination of the records shows that he was assessed in 1676 £104 for stock and land, a considerable property for a man of his youth to have acquired at that time. In 1683 he had increased his worldly goods in the eyes of the assessors to £174/10.

His son, Pieter, occupied his father's farm. He was born May 18th, 1680; died March 13th, 1774, and married Eyte Suydam, who died September 25th, 1777. As a man of affairs, Pieter was County Treasurer from 1737 to 1772. He was also prominent in church. In 1767 he conveyed to his son, John, for a consideration of £1400, the homestead farm in Flatbush.

Jan Lefferts, the above mentioned son, was born March 16th, 1719, and died October 20th, 1776; married first, April 29th, 1746, Sarah Martense, born November 23rd, 1727; died December 30th, 1762. He married second, Lemmetje Vanderbilt, on April 17th, 1765; born May 25th, 1720; died April 17th, 1782. He was Judge of the Court of Sessions and Common Pleas from 1751 to 1761, one of the County Judges from 1761 to 1770, and first Judge from 1770 until his death. Town Clerk of Flatbush 1773 to 1776, and delegate to the Provincial Congress. He was a man of great wealth.

His son, Pieter Lefferts, born December 27th, 1753; died October 7th, 1791; married first, May 13th, 1775, Jannetie Lefferts; and second, June 7th, 1784, Femmetie, daughter of Evert Hegeman and Seytie Suydam,

## The John Lefferts Homestead

his wife. He was a well-known patriot and Lieutenant of Militia of Flatbush. His home was burned during the Battle of Flatbush by the Americans, because the British were shooting from behind it. Later Mr. Lefferts rebuilt it as we see it to-day, after the original design. Mr. Lefferts was a State Senator, and a Judge of the Court of Sessions and Common Pleas.

John Lefferts, son of the above, was born December 14th, 1785, and died September 18th, 1829. He married June 3rd, 1823, Maria Lott Lefferts. The greater part of his life after he passed his majority was spent in public office, which showed how much the people thought of him. From October 1811, to September, 1813, he held the office of County Treasurer. In 1813 he was a Member of Congress. In 1821 he was a Member of the State Constitutional Convention, and from 1821 to 1826 a State Senator.

His son, John, born August 12th, 1826, inherited the homestead, and married first Eliza I., daughter of James Lefferts, of Bedford, born April 18th, 1831; died November 13th, 1867. He married second, February 1st, 1871, Helena A. Evans, born July 30th, 1840. Mr. Lefferts died April 18th, 1893, honored and loved by all with whom he came in contact.

James Lefferts, a son of Mr. John Lefferts by his first wife, owns the old homestead and with his family occupy it. It would not be right to omit mention of Gertrude L. Lefferts, eldest child of Senator John Lefferts. She was born April 16th, 1824, and married, July 8th, 1846, Judge John Vanderbilt, who died March 16th, 1877. Her life was largely spent in charitable pursuits. She was the author of an interesting book entitled "Social History of Flatbush," and was respected by all who knew her for her nobleness of mind.

We have traced the ownership of this house, from father to son, for eight generations, or nearly two hundred and fifty years. The house, of course, is not so old, but is it not a lesson to our modernism, that these good people, their ancestors and descendants, who lived on or near this spot, prospered in one locality for so many years?





The Martense-Story Homestead



## The Martense-Story Homestead

The Martense-Story Homestead, though not among the oldest houses in Kings County, is of sufficient antiquity to interest us, and we would be attracted to it, not only on account of its personal charms, but the fact that Aunt Rachel Martense, who lived to pass the century mile-stone of life, was born here. This place was recently sold at auction to settle the estates of Rachel Martense and William H. and Joseph S. Story, deceased. It consisted of a part of the farm of the late Adrian I. Martense.

Adrian I. Martense lived in this house. He was born October 3rd, 1776; died September 13th, 1826. He lived the life of a farmer, and married Deborah Berry. She was born September 25th, 1780, and died March 7th, 1865. They had issue Maria, who married first, Stephen Schenck in March, 1825. He died December 25th, 1825; and she married second, William W. Story, on January 25th, 1831. Captain Story died on March 10th, 1875, aged 77 years.

They had issue:

William H. Story, who married Myra Bergen, a daughter of Mr. John C. Bergen and Berlinda Antonidis, his wife. Mr. Story was a civil engineer, and died in 1907 without surviving issue.

Martense B. Story married Augusta Cruikshank. He was for many years connected with the New York Dock Company, and at present resides in Flatbush.

Joseph S. Story, who for many years lived with his aunt, Rachel Martense, was not married and is now deceased.

Rachel Martense was born February 2nd, 1801, and died February 14th, 1905, having earned the title of "Flatbush's oldest inhabitant." She never married, and rumor says it was because of a love affair in her youth. What fortitude she must have possessed to remain single all those years. She lived a Christian life, working for others. A friend told me how, when she was nearly a hundred years old and her eyesight was almost gone, she would sew on coarse garments, such as underwear, for the poor.

Jane Martense, born in 1803; died October 30th, 1828, single. Elizabeth Martense, born in 1806; died July 26th, 1871; married May 12th, 1846, to Henry L. Crabb, of Flatbush.

## The Martense-Story Homestead

On February 1st, 1865, Rachel Martense, as individual and as trustee of her father's estate, Maria M. Story and her husband, and Elizabeth Crabb and her husband, divided the land of their parents by deed of that date. This consisted of the land which they had inherited from their father and Gerret Martense, who I believe was a great-uncle born September 19th, 1740; died November 9th, 1826, single. He with their father had held the land in common, until they divided it on February 2nd, 1819, as per deeds of that date.

Adrian I. Martense was a son of Isaac Martense, who was born June 9th, 1748; died November 12th, 1778; married November 5th, 1775, to Maria Meserole, born October 22nd, 1758; died June 18th, 1846.

Isaac Martense was a son of Adrian Martense, of Flatbush, born October 24th, 1707; died September 17th, 1780; married Neeltje, of Flatbush. On the division of his father's plantation he received the west farm. He was a son of Martin Adriance, commonly called "Martin de Boer," from the fact of having the largest farm in Flatbush. His homestead stood where the Parade Grounds are now.

The farm of Martin Adriance extended from Caton Avenue to the northerly line of Mrs. Wilbur's present holdings along Flatbush Avenue, back to the boundary line between New Utrecht and Flatbush, south for some distance along the said boundary and across it into New Utrecht. On his death he divided it into three farms. The southern farm he gave to his son, Rem Martense, from whom it descended to the Crooke family. The northern farm he gave to his son, Gerret Martense, from whom it has passed to Mrs. Lionel Wilbur, and part of it was owned by Mrs. J. M. Ferris, who was a Miss Martense before she married the distinguished editor of the *Christian Intelligencer*. The west farm descended as we have described in this sketch and in the sketch of the Martense house proper.

Martin Adriance was born March 9th, 1668; died October 30th, 1754; married Sarah Remsen, born December 1st, 1670; died April 30th, 1723. He was a son of Adriaen Reyerse, who emigrated from Amsterdam to this country in 1646, and married July 29th, 1659, Annetje Martense, daughter of Martin Roelofse Schenck, of Flatlands, who is spoken of elsewhere in this volume. Adriaen Reyerse died November 24th, 1710.





The Van Brunt-Robarts Homestead, erected previous to the Revolution

## The Van Brunt-Robarts Homestead

Among the numerous Dutchmen who came to America previous to 1664, few have left descendants who have adhered to the virtues of their race as have the descendants of Rutger Joesten Van Brunt. I do not say this because I am one of his descendants, but when you look through "The Van Brunt Family," a book by Tunis G. Bergen, you can distinguish the traits of the ancestors descending to the children, and when you know some of the living descendants you can not fail to appreciate them as a family. Although I believe my own branch are worthy representatives of the Van Brunt family, yet I do not keep them in mind when I write of the other branches, so that I may speak without prejudice.

But I am writing the story of an old house which for many years has interested me, and the branch of the Van Brunt family who owned it are very remotely connected with mine, so perhaps I can trust my pen to an unbiased task.

The common ancestor, Rutger Joesten Van Brunt, emigrated from Netherlands in 1653. In 1657 he was among the first settlers of New Utrecht. Unlike many of the other Dutch names in America, Van Brunt was a surname, and to-day there is a family in Holland by this name. He was a large landholder and at various times held offices of public trust. It is recorded that the life of his wife was threatened by one of the freebooters who was engaged to fight the battles of the English Towns on Long Island. He threatened to thrust poor Tryntie Claes through with a sword. Van Brunt had married Tryntje Claes, the widow of Stoffel Hermenson, who had been killed by the Indians in 1655, and by whom all his children were born.

The line we are to follow descends through Joost Van Brunt, a son of the common ancestor. He probably owned and occupied this farm. April 16th, 1687, he married Aeltie, daughter of Coert Stevensz Van Voorhees, of Flatlands. He died about 1746, and his wife on November 12th, 1746. For many years he was a deacon or elder of the New Utrecht Church, and was Supervisor for upwards of thirty years. He advanced in the militia to the rank of Colonel. There is a court record of an attack made upon him by upwards of thirty persons, who stole 30 acres of his corn and wounded him. "The cause of this riot has not been ascertained," says Bergen.

In the next generation we find his only son, Rutgert, who was known as Ryke Bood or rich brother, the reason for which is apparent. His death

## The Van Brunt-Robarts Homestead

occurred July 5th, 1758. He married Jannetje Van Dyck, of New Utrecht. He was Supervisor of New Utrecht from 1744 to 1758, and at one time Captain of the militia; was also a member of the Consistory of the Church. Upon his death he divided his land among his four daughters, his son having previously been accidentally drowned. We suppose he lived on this farm, and if he did he probably lived in this house, as we would judge it to be of ample age. Compared with the Colonel Jeromus Lott House erected previous to the Revolution, and to other landmarks of the pre-Revolution period, it was erected in the first part of the 18th century, as after 1750 the houses were given a higher foundation. I remember when the chimneyplace was exposed at the side, and the bricks were of the kind brought from Holland.

On the division of Rutger Van Brunt's estate on September 23rd, 1762, this farm was allotted to his daughter Maria, who died a short time previous to the Revolution. About April, 1737, Maria Van Brunt married Joris Lott, who was born October 3rd, 1717; died August 26th, 1762. They had issue two children; namely,

John Lott, who died before his father and whose descendants occupied part of the New Utrecht land;

And Jannetje Lott, born January 14th, 1745; died in 1817; married September 24th, 1763, Nicholas Cowenhoven, of New Utrecht, a neighbor, who was known as Judge Cowenhoven. They had children as follows:

(1). John N. Cowenhoven, married Susan Martense, and had children; Maria, born April 6th, 1803; died June 23rd, 1867; married May 20th, 1820, Egbert Benson; and Jane, born February 1st, 1805, who married June 27th, 1827, Daniel Roberts, of New Utrecht;

(2). George Cowenhoven, married Elizabeth, daughter of Rutger Van Brunt, of Gravesend, and died without issue.

Maria Cowenhoven Benson and Jane Cowenhoven, who later became Mrs. Robarts, divided the land of their late father, John N. Cowenhoven, on August 31st, 1826. The farm we are describing descended thus to Mrs. Robarts.

Those who have owned this place, when making alterations, have wisely kept near to its original design. I claim no beauty but simple quaintness for this old friend. It has seen many interesting events. Past this dooryard

## The Van Brunt-Robarts Homestead

swept the British Army on August 23rd, 1776, driving before them the handful of raw Americans, farmers and tradesmen, who were gathered to defend what they believed, and what they proved, were their inalienable rights. Here, within sound of this house, was fought the most bitterly contested battle of history, which would have resulted in the most destructive battle the world has ever known, save for the masterly stratagem of that master of armies, Washington. Here, within gun-shot of our modern rifle, the liberties of America were almost snuffed out. Should we not honor this house which silently watched and waited while history was being made, doing its duty silently and faithfully, housing its occupants unto the present day? And now it stands a reminder that the men we read about really lived and had their being, and they, like us, were men subject to all the human ambitions of men, and that we, as they, may develop ourselves into men of activities not only for the present, but for the future generations, to look back with pride and say, "My grandfather did thus and so"; adding, if possible, further glory to the family name.



The Simon Cortelyou Homestead, erected previous to the Revolution



## The Simon Cortelyou Homestead

In the Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, Volume I, is a "Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1679-80, by Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter of Wiewerd in Friesland, and translated by the Hon. H. C. Murphy." An account of a visit made by them to Jacque Cortelyou, the founder of New Utrecht, at his home at Najack (Fort Hamilton) is given. It tells us, "Jaques is a man advanced in years. He was born in Utrecht, but of French parents, as we could readily discover from all his actions, looks and language." They tell us "that the village had been burned, including his house," which was half an hour's distance from it. They say, "It was now almost all rebuilt, and many good stone houses were erected, of which Jaques's was one."

Jaques came to America in 1652, and was Surveyor General of the Colony in 1657. He represented his town in the Hempstead Convention of 1665, and was Vendue-Master in 1672. He had issue:

Jaques, born about 1662; died in 1726; was twice married. He owned a part of his father's farm. Pieter, born about 1664; married before November 15th, 1694, to Diewertje De Wit; died April 10th, 1757. He also owned and cultivated a part of his father's farm at Najack, and was also a surveyor. Of his children we will trace the line of Peter, born September 25th, 1699.

Of the other issue of the common ancestor, Cornelius died before him. And of Maria and William I have no further trace. Another daughter, Helena, married August 19th, 1683, Nicholas Rutgersz Van Brunt. On his death, she married Deonys Teunis; and on his death, she married third, Hendrick Hendricksen. Bergen says of her, in the Van Brunt Family, "On the division of the real estate of Jaques Cortelyou, after his decease, Helena obtained as her portion all the land along the Narrows and bay of New York, from and including that occupied by Fort Hamilton to the land formerly of George Duryea, deceased. Her son, Jaques Denyse, by her second husband, appears to have obtained possession of this property, to the exclusion of her son by her first husband." Having seen how this tract of land was divided, we find Jaques Cortelyou, son of Peter and Diewertje Cortelyou, died October 10th, 1757. On April 25th, 1718, he married Jacomintie Van Pelt. He was a farmer, occupying, we suppose, his father's farm. He had issue two daughters and a son, Peter, born October 3rd,

## The Simon Cortelyou Homestead

1722, and married Agnes, daughter of Simon De Hart. They had issue two sons, Jaques and Simon Cortelyou.

Jaques Cortelyou was born October 16th, 1743, and died September 14th, 1815. He was twice married, first, to Mary Hewlet on November 1st, or 15th, 1767. She was born June 16th, 1737; died October 23rd, 1771. She was the mother of one child, Peter J. Cortelyou, born November 28th, 1768; died September 12th, 1804. He followed his father's example and married twice, first, to Femmetje, daughter of Adrian Voorhies, and second to Mary Alstine. Jaques Cortelyou married for a second time July 28th, 1773, Sarah Townsend, of Queen's County, who was born July 16th, 1746; died September 17th, 1829, by whom he had one son, Timothy Townsend Cortelyou, born November 19th, 1774; died May 1st, 1829; married July 23rd, 1801, to Anna, daughter of William Kouwenhoven, of Flatlands, born November 5th, 1785; died February 28th, 1843.

Timothy Townsend Cortelyou occupied a part of his father's farm. He lived in a house located on the site where the big gun formerly stood when it was in active service. This gun was the largest ever cast, and was more of a curiosity than an useful weapon. My uncle (Mr. Van Brunt) has often told me how he climbed into it when a boy. It stands now in Fort Hamilton Park. Timothy T. Cortelyou had issue Sarah T., who married Isaac, a son of John Cortelyou; Johanna, who married Simon J. Bergen; Ruth and Peter, both died single; Anna Maria, died in babyhood; Anna Maria married John L. Van Pelt; Timothy T. married Ann, daughter of Rutger I. Stillwell; Freelope Jane, who died young, and Freelope Jane, who died single; Ida, William, and Mary E. died single.

The younger brother of Jaques, Simon Cortelyou, was born March 11th, 1746; died August 15th, 1828. He married first, May 20th, 1763, Sarah Van Wyck, who died March 3rd, 1816. He married second, September 5th, 1817, Maria Bogert, widow of Jaques Borkuloo. She died September 9th, 1841. We will return to this family after lineating another branch.

When the British soldiers landed upon Long Island on August 22nd, 1776, they landed along the shore at Bath, upon the farms of Captain Adrian Van Brunt and Isaac Cortelyou, a force estimated at from 15,000 to 30,000 men. From the area of the ground covered, I believe the latter number the

## The Simon Cortelyou Homestead

nearer correct. Isaac Cortelyou was a son of Jaques and Mary Cortelyou, of New Utrecht. It would seem that his farm had been a part of the original Najack tract. He was born August 11th, 1736, and died October 3rd, 1811. He was a third cousin of Jaques and Simon Cortelyou, whom we are directly chronicling. Isaac married Altie Rapalje and had numerous issue, of whom Martha, Jaques, Isaac, Daniel and Hendrick died single, and Aletta married Albert O'Blenis, Angletie married Lefferts Martense, of Flatbush, father of Judge Garret L. Martense, and John or Johannes married Catharine, daughter of Peter Lefferts, of Flatbush.

Simon Cortelyou had four daughters. He left in his will to each one, \$4,000. They were as follows;

Hannah, then widow of Isaac Cornell, whom she married in 1783, and died in 1825. She had issue:

- (A). Isaac, married Maria Ryerson or Rapalje.
- (B). Simon, married Maria Cortelyou.
- (C). Daniel, married Catherine Rapalje.
- (D). Anna, died unmarried.
- (E). Hannah, married Dr. Nelson L. Hurd, and had two daughters.
- (F). Peter, died unmarried.
- (G). Margaret, who married Teunis Johnson, has numerous issue.
- (H). Whitehead, died unmarried.
- (I). John, lost at sea.
- (J). Sarah, unmarried.
- (K). Ruth, no further trace.
- (L). Peter, died young.

Sarah, widow of John Cornell, whom she married May 6th, 1787. She was born May 13th, 1767; died August 3rd, 1858. In 1782, she married Charles Conradi. He shot himself in "a term of Insanity." She had children as follows:

Sarah, George, Catherine, Margaret, Simon C., Agnes, and Mary, who died unmarried. Also Ann, who married Arthur J. Hirst, Whitehead J. married Juliet Hicks, George L. married Isabel Sheldon, John S. married Mary Fitz Randolph Lewis, Peter C. married Elizabeth Bunce, Isaac R. married Elizabeth M. Duyckinck, and Samuel G. married Sarah Douglass.

## The Simon Cortelyou Homestead

Agnes Cortelyou, wife of Russel Tomlinson, had several children, and resided in Connecticut. He leaves the largest part of his estate to his two grandsons, Peter and John. He names them and their brother, Simon Cortelyou, executors, and states that they are the children of his son, Peter S. Cortelyou deceased, and directs them to care for their sisters, Eliza and Agnes. He also names a daughter, Mary, deceased, wife of John S. Garretson.

Simon and Jaques Cortelyou were Tories, strong adherents of the King from the first, and many interesting tales are told of this Simon's home. At the time of the landing of the British, three houses stood upon the shore where Fort Hamilton now stands. These were the Bennet House, Denyse Denyse's stone house and ferry, and at what is now the south side of the reservation stood this house. Lossing in his *Field Book of the Revolution* shows a picture of it. In *Onderdonk's Revolutionary Incidents*, he gives an account of a bombardment which damaged the Bennet and Denyse House. But incident 867 is of particular interest. I quote it in full. "Trenton Nov. 11, '78. The 3d inst Marrener, with 7 men of Lord Stirling's division, landed at N. Utrecht and brought off Simon and Jaques Cortelyou, two famous Tories in the enemies' lines and specie and other property, to the amount of \$5,000. The prisoners are on parole at Brunswick, and are to be exchanged for two citizens of Jersey, in captivity with the enemy.

"Capt. Marrener took Simon Cortelyou, of N. Utrecht to N. Brunswick as a return for his uncivil conduct to the American prisoners. He took his silver tankard and several other articles. Gen. Johnson.

"On Tuesday night, Nov. 3d. between 11 and 12, Simon and Jaques Cortelyou were carried off by a party of rebels, from the Narrows. The house of the former was robbed of cash to the amount of £200, besides a large quantity of linen, blankets &c. The marauders behaved with their usual insolence and inhumanity, and frequently threatened the terrified children of the family, then in bed, with immediate death. Gaine Nov. 8, '78."

Ross, in his *History of Long Island*, says that General Howe slept in this house the night after the landing of the British. In the *Memorial History of the City of New York*, of which General James Grant Wilson was editor,

## The Simon Cortelyou Homestead

it is said it was supposed to have been Lord Howe's headquarters. I am told it was burned down about four years ago. Mrs. Townsend Cortelyou Van Pelt loaned me the original photograph from which the picture shown in this book was taken.



The Van Pelt Manor House, erected over 200 years ago

## The Van Pelt Manor House

Teunis Jansen, or Tonis Jansen Lanen Van Peelt as he wrote his name, from Luyck, in Netherlands, in 1675, 1678 and 1680, bought land in New Utrecht, and is mentioned in the Dongan Patent of 1686. Was known as Tonis, the Fisher. He was supposed to have married twice; first, to (sup.) Grietje Jans, and second, on August 6th, 1696, to Gertrude Jans, the widow of John Otter. The similarity of names is confusing, and early historians may have made a mistake, for they may be the same person.

The second generation was Aert Tunise Van Pelt, son of the above, by his first wife. He was born in 1663, in New Amsterdam, and married September 10th, 1686, Neeltie Janse Van Tuil. He was a magistrate of New Utrecht in 1694, Lieutenant of militia in 1705, and Captain in 1715. On September 10th, 1694, he bought this farm of Hendrick Mathysen Smack, the common ancestor of the Smock family. It was known as plantation-lot No. 10. He bought of Balthazer Vosch plantation-lot No. 11 in 1677. These two lots contained 58 morgan or 116 acres. In 1706 he was assessed for 80 acres of land. He had probably sold a part of his holdings by that time.

Peter Van Pelt, son of the above, married October 19th, 1734, Antje Dorland. Was Captain of New Utrecht Militia in 1750, and died September 6th, 1781. His son, Rem Van Pelt, born April 17th, 1738, married Ida Lefferts, daughter of Jacobus Lefferts and Catherine Vanderbilt, his wife; born January 26th, 1745; died July 2nd, 1828.

Rem Van Pelt was a farmer. He was born in this historic homestead. Bergen tells in his Van Brunt Family the following incident of him.

"On the 13th of June, 1778, Wm. Marrener with Lieut. John Schenck and twenty-eight militia-men from Middletown Point, N. J., landed from two boats on the New Utrecht beach, and after having called upon their friends, with a portion of their force marched to Flatbush with the intention of making prisoners of Mayor Matthews of N. Y., Miles Sherbrook, Major Moncriffe and Theophylact Bache. The attempt on the two former failed on account of their absence, but succeeded with the others, and in addition, Capt. Forrest was captured, who were all safely carried off from their beds, marched to the Beach, and taken to New Jersey. The British authorities rightly supposed that it was impossible for Marrener's party to have marched

## The Van Pelt Manor House

to Flatbush in the evening without having been seen by some of the inhabitants. Those who knew of or had seen the party and failed to give the alarm, by law, were guilty of treason. Col. Rutgert Van Brunt, of Gravesend, and his brother Adrian, and Rem Van Pelt and his brother Aert, of New Utrecht, were arrested on the 16th of June, on suspicion, and confined separately in the provost jail in New York. The colonel who had money, managed to bribe the sergeant who had charge so as to obtain a midnight interview with his fellow prisoners, at which it was arranged to deny all knowledge of the affair. When examined separately, they all agreed in their story, and no proof appearing against them, they were discharged."

Captain Marrener told General Johnson after the Revolution, that after he had landed he went to the house of his friend, Old Man Van Pelt (Peter Van Pelt), knocked on his window, and told him of his intentions. He had been quartered, when a prisoner of the British, at this house. After Mr. Van Pelt had wished him luck, he went to his son's, Rem Van Pelt's, and from there made his final start.

Peter Van Pelt lived in the homestead, and the window is shown where Marrener tapped. The Van Pelts owned two farms in New Utrecht. Peter Van Pelt left the manor-house and surrounding land to his son, Aert Van Pelt, who was born October 20th, 1748; married Femmetje Stellenwerf, and died without issue. He left the manor-house to his grand-nephew, John L. Van Pelt, subject to payments to other heirs. All of Rem's descendants were born in the other house.

Rem Van Pelt died March 18th, 1829, leaving issue:

(1). Geertje Van Pelt, born April 30th, 1770; died September 8th, 1796; married November 6th, 1788, to Hendrick Suydam, son of Captain Lambert Suydam of Bedford and had a son, Lambert, who married Wilhelmina, daughter of Winant Bennet, of New Utrecht.

(2). Jacob Van Pelt, a farmer, of New Utrecht, was born March 10th, 1774, and died October 16th, 1827; married August 19th, 1802, to Maritie, daughter of Johannes E. Lott and Catharine Vanderbilt, his second wife. Judge Lott was the first Surrogate of Kings County, and the leading man of his generation not only in Flatbush but also in all Kings County. Maritje Lott Van Pelt was born October 10th, 1781, and died October 3rd, 1852. They had issue:



## The Van Pelt Manor House

(A). Gertrude Van Pelt, born September 22nd, 1804, and died November 5th, 1851, single.

(B). John Lott Van Pelt, born August 1st, 1806; married December 17th, 1834, Anna Maria, daughter of Timothy T. Cortelyou. Mr. Van Pelt died in 1885.

Jacob Van Pelt was born and lived in another old house at Eighty-sixth Street and Twentieth Avenue. There his son, John L. Van Pelt, was born and lived, and there Townsend Cortelyou Van Pelt was born, but on his marriage he moved to the Old Manor House. When he took up his abode in the ancestral home it was a simple old house without a room in the second story; these he put in, as well as a heating plant and modern conveniences. In the parlor, around the fireplace, are the old Dutch tiles brought from Holland when the first house was erected here. As was customary they depict Bible Stories. John Lott Van Pelt and Anna Maria Cortelyou, his wife, had six children, namely:

The late John V. Van Pelt, who married Josephine G. Miller.

Mary L. Van Pelt, widow of Jeremiah Van Brunt, of New Utrecht.

The late Jacob L. Van Pelt.

Anna Cortelyou Van Pelt, widow of George Shields, of Bath Beach.

Delia Van Pelt, first wife of the late George Shields.

And Townsend Cortelyou Van Pelt, who was born November 13th, 1837, and married October 24th, 1866, Maria Elizabeth Ditmars, daughter of the late John Ditmars, of Flatlands Neck. (See the John Ditmars Homestead.) She was born September 24th, 1843. For many years Mr. and Mrs. Van Pelt have been the leading spirits in the Liberty Pole preservation movement, described at some length in another chapter. In this house much has been done to preserve the history of our past. Mrs. Van Pelt is noted for her knowledge of local history. She is connected with several patriotic associations, and is the founder of the New Utrecht Liberty Pole Association, which was organized in the parlor of this historic home.

In front of this house stands one of the few remaining direction stones erected previous to the Revolution. Another stands in front of the Judge Stillwell place. One formerly stood in front of Mr. John L. Ryder's, but I think only two of these stones are left in position.



Gerretsen's Mill at Gravesend

## Gerretsen's Mill at Gravesend, L. I.

The Indian deed of Barren Island, a copy of which is in my possession, says: it is "enviored with the main ocean sea which on the westernmost part thereof branches itself, unto a river running northerly, that is to say, to the land sometime belonging to Hugh Garretson." This evidently alludes to the Strome Kil now known as Garritson's Creek and Mill Pond. Tunis G. Bergen in his "Early Settlers of Kings County," says: "Samuel (Geretsen) m. Ida Barents. On ass. roll of Gd. of 1693. Cen. of 1698 and deeds of same dates as per pp. 175-177-182 and 183 of Lib. 2 of Con; also clerk of the board of supervisors in 1703, and mem. of the colonial legislature from 1716 to 1737. Believe him to be the ancestor of the Gd. family of Garretsens, who owned a farm and tide mill in said town located on the Strome Kil, the boundary between Gd. and Flds. known as Gerretsen's mill; and also of the late J. Fletcher Gerretsen and Judge Sam'l Gerretsen of Brn. and Thos. Gerretsen of Flds. Issue Ferdinandus bp. Apr. 25th, 1696 and other children."\* From the same source we find that he was a son of Gerret and Mary Remmersen. We also find that this Gerret was a son of Rem, of Gravesend, and that Hugh Garretson owned land adjoining Flatlands, prior to 1645.

In tracing back the line of ownership, I met with some difficulty on account of the lack of genealogical reference to this family. In the New York Surrogate's office I found my first link. There in Liber 25, page 232, is the will of Johannes Gerritsen, miller, of Gravesend, who gave to his son, Samuel Gerritsen, all his real and personal estate, subject to certain legacies, which he (Samuel) was to pay. In this will he names his widow, Jannetie, and a daughter, Ida. His executors are named as his brother-in-law Michiel Vandervoort, and Rem Williamson and his cousin Jacobus Rider. The date of this will is December 20th, 1765.

Johannes Gerritsen is evidently a son or grandson of Samuel Geretsen, spoken of by Bergen. It seems to me that he was a son, born some time after 1700, for at the making of his will he (Johannes) had a son evidently past majority. There is no question raised in the will about the son's majority. Now, this is a carefully executed instrument. Gerritsen, being a Dutchman,

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\* Names are spelled as the people themselves spelled them. Father and son often spelled the surname differently.

## Gerretsen's Mill at Gravesend, L. I.

he would most surely have arranged his will to meet such an emergency. Considering that fact, he was probably at the time of ensembling his will a man of 50 to 65 years of age. Then, too, there was a custom among the Dutch, which has come down to the present day, of which your compiler's name is an example, of naming the children after the grandparents, and giving them as a middle name the first name of their parents. This Gerritsen family illustrates that fact.

The next record I found was the will of Samuel Garritsen, of Gravesend, recorded in the Kings County Surrogate's office, in Liber 2, probated in 1822. In this will he leaves his grist mill and farm to his son, John S., and names daughters, Jane and Elizabeth. He appoints his son-in-law, John Lott, and his grandson, Van Brunt Magaw, executors.

Van Brunt Magaw was born September 7th, 1783; died March 18th, 1831; was a son of Colonel Robert Magaw, an officer of distinction in the Revolution, and Marritje, daughter of Colonel Rutgert Van Brunt. Van Brunt Magaw, married November 2nd, 1811, Adriana, daughter of Louwrens Voorhees and Jannetie, his wife, daughter of Samuel Garritson.

Elizabeth Garritsen, married John Lott, second son of Judge Johannes E. Lott and Catharine Vanderbilt, his second wife. They lived on the farm which Judge Lott bought of the heirs of Philip Nagel. He left this farm on his death to John Lott. They (Mr. and Mrs. John Lott) were the parents of Samuel G. Lott, the father of the late Mr. Theodore Lott.

The will of John S. Gerretson, miller, of Gravesend, was probated September 2nd, 1864, and is recorded in Liber 28. He leaves his farm, meadows and mill to his son, Samuel J. Gerretsen, and another farm which he had bought of the Stillwells, to his other son, Simon C. Gerretsen.

Samuel J. Gerretsen's will was recorded on October 31st, 1876, and was made May 4th of the same year. He leaves all his property, both real and personal, to his two daughters, Mary C., widow of Abraham Ditmas Polhemus, and Helen B., wife of Stephen H. Herriman, both of Brooklyn.

We find a genealogical record of the family at this point, namely that Samuel J. Gerretsen, of Gravesend, married October 2nd, 1821, Jane, daughter of Jacob Van Brunt and Esther Vanderbilt, his wife, born May 14th, 1803; died November 20th, 1861. They had children as follows:

## Gerretsen's Mill at Gravesend, L. I.

Mary C., born July 7th, 1822; married May 13th, 1846, Abraham D. Polhemus, of Brooklyn. Helen B., born November 15th, 1824; married on April 25th, 1853, to Stephen H. Herriman, of Brooklyn.

On December 20th, 1864, Samuel J. Gerretsen deeded part of this property to his son-in-law, Abraham Ditmas Polhemus, and on November 14th, 1879, the executors of the will of Abraham D. Polhemus sold the premises which he had purchased to Helen V. B. Herriman. On the death of Stephen H. Herriman, who had acquired his wife's interest in the property, he left it to his three children, namely: William S. Herriman, Maria Bell Hazen and Helen Herriman. On the death of W. S. Herriman he left his sister, Maria Bell Hazen, his interest in the Gravesend property. Thus the title became vested in Mrs. Hazen and Miss Herriman.

In 1899 Mrs. Hazen and Miss Herriman sold the estate to the Honorable William C. Whitney, who rebuilt, laid out, refitted and restored the premises, making one of the most magnificent country seats around New York. On his death his son, Harry Payne Whitney, came into possession of the property.



The John S. Voorhees Homestead, erected about 200 years ago

## The John S. Voorhees Homestead

This house is now owned by Mr. George Stillwell, of Gravesend, who has made a study of all that pertains to our local history. It was inherited by his wife, Jane E. Voorhees, who was a daughter of Lucas J. and Gertrude (Suydam) Voorhees.

Lucas J. Voorhees was born April 20th, 1809,\* and died January 21st, 1879. He was married on December 17th, 1829, to his cousin Gertrude Suydam, who was born November 19th, 1808. She passed away May 15th, 1877. The father of Lucas J. was John S. Voorhees. He was born October 8th, 1780, and died February 23rd, 1862. On August 26th, 1804, he married Adrianna Voorhees, born August 22nd, 1787. She died June 2nd, 1854.

Stephen J. Voorhees was the father of John S., and he was born February 1739, and died about 1816. He married May 31st, 1767, Phebe Ryder, who was born January 22nd, 1749, and died March 25th, 1816. Stephen J. Voorhees' name appears on the militia rolls of Gravesend of 1761. Of his children, Jane, born April 4th, 1773; died September 17th, 1831; married April 4th, 1797, George Suydam, of Gravesend, and they were the parents of Gertrude, who married Lucas J. Voorhees.

An interesting story is told how John S. Voorhees's father fought in the Battle of Long Island. The militia could not be compelled to leave the island, as their families and possessions were at stake. Some of them did, however, and among them was Stephen J. Voorhees. He stayed with the Continental Army until the last. There is a tradition that a Hessian soldier was buried under the back parlor of this house. When the British were expected to land, General Washington ordered all the grain to be stacked in the fields for burning, and arrangements made for driving off and killing the cattle. I am told that for many years you could see, on a lonely road back of Gravesend, the bones of these cattle bleaching in the sun. When the officers whose duty it was to devastate the country came round, they allowed Mrs. Voorhees to keep one of her cows, if she would hide it in a bedroom or cellar, because she had a young baby. This she did.

In the melee of the Battle of Long Island her husband had become separated from his company and had worked his way home. A Hessian soldier

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\* Lucas Voorhees's name is written in the Voorhees Genealogy as Lucas J. Voorhees, while in some places in other books his name is written Lucas I. Voorhees.

## The John S. Voorhees Homestead

entered the house in search of beef. He discovered the cow which was hidden to supply the baby with milk, and set about to carry it off, but in an altercation with the head of the house he was killed. They, according to tradition, buried him in the cellar so that his friends would not learn what had happened to him, and cause the family trouble. Mr. Voorhees realized that it would be better for him to reach the American Army without delay, and he made his escape to them that night.

To me this house is of particular interest, as it embodies a number of ideas which leads your compiler to believe it to be very old. The wing at the left of the picture is of quite recent date, and the other wings appear to have been added. The nearness to the ground is characteristic of the first part of the Eighteenth Century. I am of the opinion that it is about two hundred years old. If I am right it was erected by John Coerte Voorhees and Seytie, his wife, who were the parents of Stephen J. Voorhees.

John Coerte Voorhees was a son of Steven Coerte, who was the first Voorhees in Gravesend, and who married Agatha Janse, and died February 16th, 1723-4. He was a son of Koert Stevensen of Flatlands, who emigrated with his father in 1660. He was born in 1637, and married prior to 1664, Marretje Gerritse Van Couwenhoven. He held numerous offices both in church and state. In 1689 was Captain of militia. March 8th, 1691-2 he bought of John Tilton all his real estate in Gravesend. At one time, he signed his name Coert Stevense Van Ruinen.

His father was the common ancestor of the Voorhees family in America. He emigrated, in 1660, with his wife and seven children, from Ruinen, in Drenthe, Netherlands. He purchased land in Amersfoort and owned the house plot in Amersfoort, including the brewery with its apparatus, which he purchased of Cornelis Direksen Hoogland on November 29th, 1660, with other lands, etc., for 3,000 guilders, a large sum at that time. This shows that some of the settlers brought money with them from Netherlands. This brewery was located near the Flatlands Church, and at the junction of Kings Highway, Mill Lane and the present Flatbush Avenue.







The Judge Nicholas Stillwell Homestead, erected about 1808

## The Judge Nicholas Stillwell Homestead\*

The homestead we are about to describe interests me for other reasons than that of its age. Its interests are not those which years will dim, but which will draw nearer and dearer to those who make a study of God's noblest work, man. Here, in this house, lived one of those men, who did not wait for death to receive the praise of his fellow men. This house was the home of Judge Nicholas Stillwell, a man who coped with difficult things and achieved success. His head was never turned either by honor or flattery. A man of will, of purpose, and of integrity.

He was born on June 10th, 1808, and lived until 1885. His life was a life of toil and usefulness, not only for himself, but for his neighbors as well. For thirty-seven years he was Clerk of Gravesend, and for many years Justice of the Peace and Coroner. For fourteen years he was a Justice of the Supreme Court. A strong adherent of General Jackson, his entire life was spent as an active member of the Democratic party. Judge Stillwell was also interested in militia and served with honor, holding the rank of First Lieutenant, First New York Light Horse Artillery. It is interesting to know that he had and used his grandfather's (Colonel Nicholas Stillwell) sword.

His choice of a helpmate was characteristic of the man; a lady of most honorable and respectable lineage, member of a family as old as his own, Miss Sarah Stevense Voorhees. They were the parents of four children; Ella J., widow of Peter V. Voorhees, George Stillwell\*, owner of this house, Anna M. Stillwell, and Ida, wife of Elias Hubbard Ryder. In 1880 Judge Stillwell lost his wife with whom he had traveled on life's journey for so many years.

Mr. George Stillwell, his son, now owns but does not occupy the old home. I am indebted to him for many interesting facts in relation to this and other works which I have under way. He is a man with a wonderful memory, and a large store of facts which are very interesting. He has spent many years collecting antiques, and his beautiful home is similar to a museum. He was born in the homestead on March 8th, 1838, and has lived all his life

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\* Since these articles were written, Mr. George Stillwell has passed away. He was a man of distinguishing characteristics. Honest, brilliant and a true Christian, a man we should strive to emulate. He was an authority on antiques and local history. Mr. Stillwell's word was always relied upon, and he possessed the virtues and determination bequeathed to him by a long line of noble ancestors, both English and Dutch. All honest men have lost in him a true friend, and all corrupt schemers a powerful enemy. He died June 26th, 1909.

## The Judge Nicholas Stillwell Homestead

in Gravesend. He received his education at his home town, which speaks well for the local school. A man of sound judgment, he made his business career on the farm and elsewhere eminently successful. He married on November 19th, 1872, Jane E. Voorhees, a daughter of Lucas J. Voorhees and Gertrude Suydam, his wife. The Voorhees homestead is described elsewhere in this book. Mrs. Stillwell died on December 10th, 1908. They were the parents of Sarah Gertrude Stillwell, who married Herman Hajenga. Mrs. Hajenga passed away on December 3rd, 1908, in her 34th year, leaving issue two sons.

But to return to the old home, Mr. Stillwell tells me it was built about 1808 by his grandfather, Nicholas R. Stillwell, who was the oldest of a family of nine, having been born on August 8th, 1768. He died December 25th, 1809, and married Nellie Koenhoven (Couwenhoven?), of New Utrecht. Their only son was Judge Stillwell. Nicholas R. Stillwell was the son of Richard Stillwell and Mary Johnson, his wife.

Richard Stillwell was born September 22nd, 1734. He was a son of Colonel Nicholas Stillwell, who was born December 2nd, 1709, and married December 22nd, 1733, Altie Van Brunt; born April 22nd, 1712, died October 1st, 1776. Colonel Stillwell was with the militia in the Battle of Long Island, but after the battle returned home to protect his property, and, being an old man, did not rejoin the army. He died before the war was ended.

His father, Richard Stillwell, was born May 11th, 1677; married first, Maria, whose last name I have been unable to find, and second, October 22nd, 1733, Altie Ditmars, who died February 11th, 1758. He is supposed by Bergen to have owned a farm at Sellers Neck, which in 1880 was owned by Cornelius Stryker, a descendant. In 1702 he was High Sheriff, in 1715 Colonel of militia, and in 1725-27 a Member of the Colonial Assembly.

He was a son of Nicholas Stillwell and Catharine Morgan, his wife. Nicholas Stillwell came over with his father in 1638. He was born in 1636, and married the mother of Richard, November 6th, 1671. They had a civil marriage before Justice Hubbard.

Nicholas Stillwell, the emigrant, settled first on Manhattan Island and died on Staten Island, December 22nd, 1671; married first, Abigail, daugh-

## The Judge Nicholas Stillwell Homestead

ter of Robert Hopton; and second, Ann Van Dyke, of Holland. He owned a house and lot on Beaver Street, New Amsterdam.

The Stillwells are an old and an honorable family both in this country and England. They are said to be related to Charles the first, King of England, who was beheaded.

This Nicholas Stillwell was one of the Englishmen who joined Lady Moody in the settlement of Graoenzande or Gravesend, which they intended to make a city, laying it out in the manner of the cities of England. This, they thought, might become the capital of the English Towns on Long Island. The plan to found the town had to be temporarily abandoned because of an attack by the Indians. During this war he defended the town as an officer of militia, holding the rank of Lieutenant, and was one of the first to return after the war. According to the records he was somewhat of a real estate operator, as he was a party to many conveyances. He appears to have been a man of great wealth. There is still a silver cup in the family (Mr. Stillwell informs me) which Nicholas brought from England. Bergen says of him, "Nicholas Stillwell is entitled to credit for never swerving from his allegiance to the Dutch government, which is more than can be said of many of his English neighbors, who, on what they supposed to be the first favorable opportunity, proved themselves to be traitors to the colony to which they were indebted for protection and the enjoyment of religious liberty." He was the founder of a race of men who have followed in his steps. They have been true to principle and honor.



## The New Utrecht Liberty Pole

On November 25th, 1783, the British forces evacuated New York and the Continental Army took possession. It was a glorious event to the people of Long Island. They were a Dutch people, and the rule of the English was at best the rule of the conqueror. As soon as peace was declared, they set about preparing to fittingly celebrate the departure of the British. This was done by the erection of a Liberty Pole in each town.

We know nothing of this Liberty Pole celebration, except that it occurred. Of the other celebrations which occurred in the other towns we have more or less authentic reports. It is certain that, as in the other cases, the ladies made the flag and the men cut and erected the pole. The event was then celebrated by a public ball or an elegant dinner.

The pole stood until 1834, when the inhabitants took up a collection and planted a new pole, dedicating it with proper exercises. The present pole was erected in May, 1867, through the efforts of Colonel William J. Cropsey and Mr. Rulif Van Brunt. This pole became dilapidated and was reset May, 1899.

The usual method used to secure funds for the care of the pole was to form a committee and collect the necessary money to do the work, and to hold exercises in commemoration. For the last quarter of a century Mr. and Mrs. Townsend C. Van Pelt have tended to the pole, keeping the flag, seeing that it was hoisted upon the pole on all public days, and tending to the necessary repairs. It is to their patriotism that we owe the preservation of this landmark, which stands in front of the New Utrecht Reformed Dutch Church, on Eighteenth Avenue. The eagle that caps the pole is the original one, erected over one hundred and twenty-five years ago.

About a year ago an Association was incorporated to care for and perpetuate the pole. They held their first meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Van Pelt, the Old Van Pelt Manor House. Officers were elected, as follows:

John F. Berry, President.	Townsend C. Van Pelt, Vice-President.
M. Stewart Hegeman, Secretary.	J. R. Van Brunt, Treasurer.

On November 25th, 1908, commemorative exercises were held. This was the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the erection of the first pole. It was one of the largest gatherings held in New Utrecht. The people filled the church, and crowded the grounds around the pole. The

## The New Utrecht Liberty Pole

exercises were carried through with great dignity, and the people were stirred by the eloquence of the patriotic speakers. The audience was composed largely of descendants of those who set the original pole.

It is interesting to know that this is the only Liberty pole now standing. In some cases other poles have been erected on the spots where liberty poles formerly stood, but a pole has stood here since the first Liberty Pole was erected.



## Kings County in the Revolution

George Clinton, the first Governor of New York State, is to me one of the most interesting characters our history presents; brave in trial and courageous on the field of battle, hopeful and valiant, but above all resourceful. He represents the noblest type of patriot. I consider him the greatest governor New York ever had, just as I consider Lincoln and Roosevelt the greatest presidents our nation ever had, and Washington and Grant the greatest generals America has produced.

One of Clinton's great services was in securing money for carrying on the Revolution. This he did in a different manner from other financiers of the period. Continental currency was of little value, yet it was practically the only money in circulation within the American lines. To secure gold was the great task facing the authorities, and had they all been as successful as Governor Clinton the war would have ended at an earlier date.

The people of Long Island were within the British lines and were unable to aid the Americans to any great extent. Much false criticism has been made against the farmers of Kings County for failing to be of more assistance to the Continental troops in the beginning of the encounter. This is largely false. The facts are that the total population of King's County at the beginning of the Revolution was less than three thousand, about half of whom were slaves. This left some fifteen hundred men, women and children to be patriots and provide an army.

The militia was composed of about two hundred and forty men and officers, exclusive of Tories. Many men from Kings County were with the Continental Army until the last. The Provincial Congress made a call for drafts to reinforce the Continental Army. The captains of various companies petitioned Congress that they might not be called upon to send one man out of every four, as it was harvest time and they must attend to their crops, but when it came to the landing of the British they would turn out their full companies to assist in defending the country. This Congress refused to do, and the draft was called. Colonel Van Brunt delivered the fifty-eight men required. A little later more men were needed, and Colonel Cowenhoven, then acting in command, sent a special company of twenty men.

In addition to this, the company of light horse was stationed as a lookout to watch the coming of the fleet, and it did such duty all summer. Dur-

## Kings County in the Revolution

ing the Battle of Long Island the militia did effective work. The light horse drove off the cattle into Queens County and burned the grain. Eighteen of this company left their horses on Long Island and crossed to Westchester, under command of Lieutenant Daniel Rapalje, and joined the Continental Army. They were clad in summer clothes, and many of them became sick from exposure. In that condition, as well as being penniless, they were deserted by the Continental Army, which had to retreat into New Jersey, in Dutchess County, New York, for the army could not carry their wounded with them, and being neighbors' sons and friends, those who were well stayed with the sick, and finally secured money and permission to return home.

In the Battle of Flatbush the militia was badly cut up, and in the Battle of Long Island they were separated from the main body, but they knew the ground, and in a majority of cases were enabled to reach their homes in safety. A large number of the women and children had been sent to Queens County or to New Jersey, but after the seat of hostilities was removed to other parts they were brought back, and the attention of the British turned to making friends with the colonists. The next year the farms were tilled as usual.

The British Army furnished a good market for their produce and prices were high, although not as high as during our own Civil War. The farmers, Tory and Whig alike, were becoming rich. Had the British known to what treasonable use their gold was being put by the Dutch farmers of Kings County, many a bough would have bent with the weight of a sturdy Dutchman suspended by his neck.

The willingness of the Dutch of Kings County to become the financiers of the State was brought to the attention of Governor Clinton. Lieutenant Samuel Dodge was captured in 1777, at Fort Montgomery. He was quartered at the residence of Barent Johnson, a well-known Whig and father of General Jeremiah Johnson, who was a founder of the St. Nicholas Society and its first President. On being exchanged, in December, 1777, he secured a loan of £700 from Mr. Johnson for the State.

Governor Clinton paid several amounts in 1782 and 1783 to Hendrick Wyckoff, Aspinwall Cornwall, Thomas Wicks, Robert Morris, Nicholas Cowenhoven, Colonel William Allison, and Colonel James Mc'Claghry,

## Kings County in the Revolution

for procuring money on Long Island. These payments, I believe, were in the nature of expenses incurred by them.

The principal agent in these matters was the brave and intrepid Major Hendrick Wyckoff, of New Lots. He was a relative and friend of many of the people of Kings County, and he would come under disguise through the lines at night and go to the house of some friend, and from there at night would go out among the people, and they would loan him all the gold they could gather on a simple blank receipt signed by Governor Clinton and filled out by the Major. Strong's History of Flatbush gives a lucid account of how he operated. He also states that not far from \$200,000 specie was loaned in this manner. I believe he underestimates. I append a list which, although it is far from complete, gives an idea of the size of these loans. I believe it has been published only in a state publication. When Dr. Strong's History was written this list could not be found. It should be remembered that only those who collected their notes with interest when due are named in this list, and of those numerous ones who in the troubled times of the war lost or destroyed their notes there is no record. It will be seen, also, to contain the names of some Tories, who were evidently trying to ride to victory on both horses.

I do not think we can blame a people for signing an address of loyalty under the same conditions as these people, who were compelled to do so or hang, as in some instances they were, or have their property confiscated and they themselves thrown into prison, and their wives and children thrown out upon the world as paupers. There was the case of my own great-great-grandfather, Nicholas Van Brunt, who refused to sign the oath of allegiance when he was captured, at the time of the Battle of Long Island, and who spent some time in the old provost for his pains. I think the most patriotic people would have done as most of the inhabitants did.

It is all very well for historians to blame them, but they should take into consideration the fact that the addresses they signed were written by Royalists such as Colonel Axtell, and have come down to us as published in Gaine's Royal Gazette.

## Kings County in the Revolution

This is the list of the financiers of the State so far as it has been discovered :

Allison, William (Col.)	Hix, Charles	Smith, Philctus
Antonides, Peter	Horten, Nathan	Smith, Timothy
Arenlanias, Philip	Johnson, Anne	Snyder, William
Barcalo, Harmanus	Johnson, Barent	Sperry, Jacob
Bennet, James	Kerehow, Jacob	Stillwell, Richard
Bennet, John	Kitcham, Zebulon	Snydam, Hendrick
Bennet, Wynant	Kissam, Daniel W.	Snydam, Jacob
Bergen, Johannes	Lattin, William	Snydam, Lambert
Bergen, Michael	Lefferts, Barent	Thompson, Isaac
Bocrum, Jacob	Lefferts, Jacob	Thorne, John
Brush, John	Lefferts, James	Thorne, Richard (Maj.)
Burtis, Abraham	Lefferts, Peter	Tillotson, Thomas
Burtis, John	Lequier, Abraham	Titus, Charles
Butler, John	Livingston, Henry	Titus, Francis
Carll, John	Lott, Hendrick	Titus, John
Carll, Phineas	Lott, Jannetje	Townsend, James
Carll, Platt	Lott, Johannes E.	Townsend, Pryor
Carll, Timothy	Lott, Stephen	Townsend, Sylvanus
Clopper (Miss)	Luyster, John	Valentine, Philip
Cock, Daniel	Martense, Adrian	Van Brunt, Adrian
Cock, William	Martense, George	Van Brunt, Albert
Coles, Nathaniel	Martense, Gerrit	Van Brunt, Nah.
Colyer, Peter	Mc'Claghry, James (Col.)	Van Brunt, R.
Cornwall, Aspinwall	McGraw, Alexander	Van Buren, James N. (Dr.)
Cornwall, Obadiah	Mesherol, John	Van Buren, John H. (Dr.)
Cortelyou, Isaac	Money, Samuel	Van Cortland, Philip
Cortelyou, Jaques	Monfort, Peter	Vanderbilt, Jeremiah
Cortelyou, Simon	Morris, Robert	Vanderbilt, John
Cowenhoven, Nicholas	Nostrand, Cornelius	Vanderbilt, John I.
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